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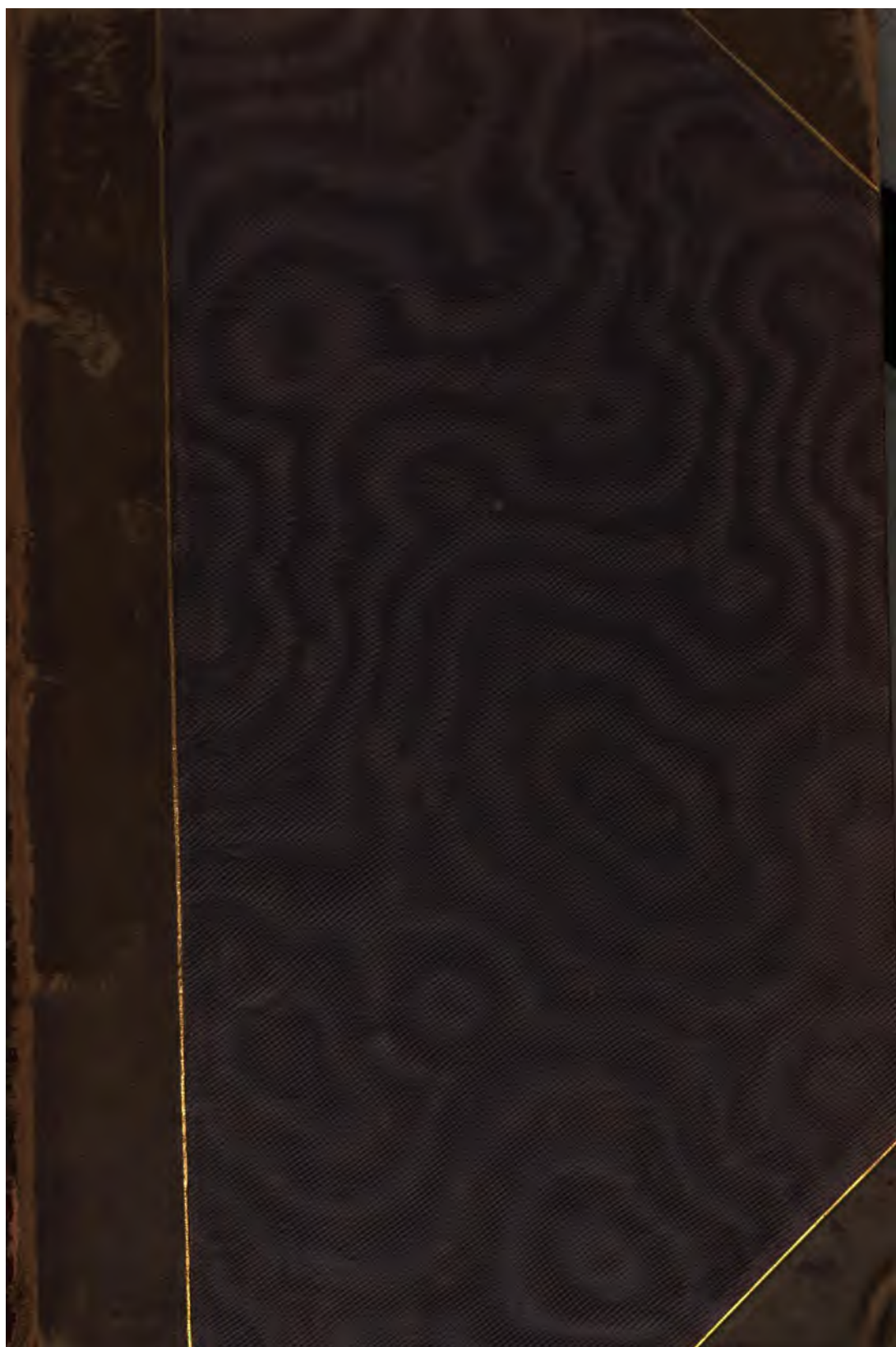
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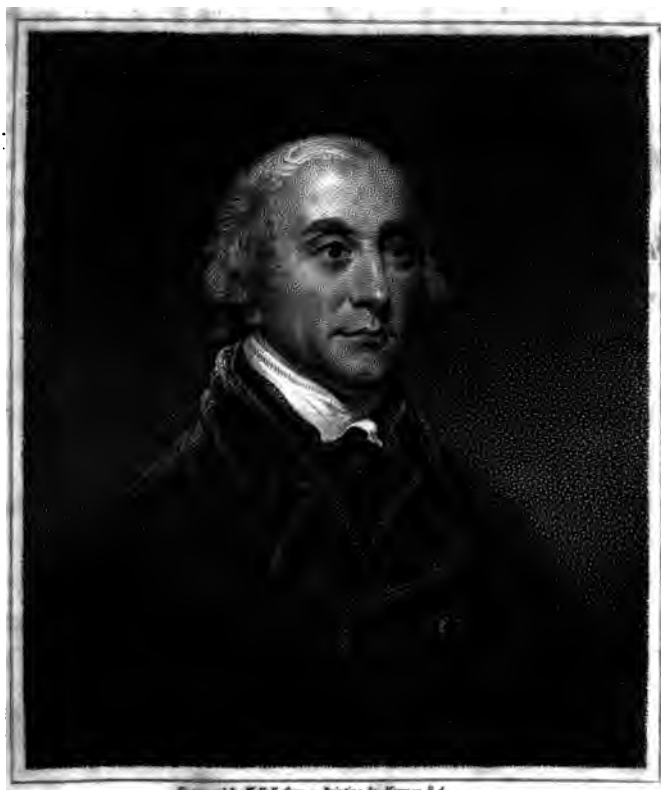
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Engraved by H. B. H. from a painting by H. H. H. R.A.

The Right Hon.^{ble} William Windham M.P.

Published by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row April 2. 1812.

*By Thomas Amyot Esq.
from his Friend
The Author*

SOME ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM WINDHAM;

INTENDED AS

A PREFACE TO HIS SPEECHES IN PARLIAMENT.

BY

THOMAS AMYOT, Esq.

*" — ut civem, ut senatorem — ut virum denique cum prudentia
et diligentia, tum omni virtute excellentem, probo; orationes autem ejus
valde laudo."*

CICERO.

NOT PUBLISHED SEPARATELY.

LONDON:

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1812.

210. e. 273.



TO

EARL FITZWILLIAM.

MY LORD,

IN availing myself of Your Lordship's most obliging permission to inscribe to you the following Work, I am performing an act the propriety of which will not fail to be concurred in by all Mr. WINDHAM's friends. The grounds of that concurrence need not be sought for in your exalted rank or more distinguished character;—they are to be found in the uninterrupted private friendship and political agreement which subsisted between Your Lordship and the illustrious person of whom these memorials are collected—in the striking proofs which occurred of your kindness and regard for him

—and in the watchful and affectionate solicitude which Your Lordship shewed, and which I, among many others, had the melancholy gratification of witnessing, during that illness which deprived his King and Country of a faithful servant and most zealous champion.

Two years have this day elapsed since the extinction of those talents and virtues, those graces of mind and of heart, which I am persuaded are still fresh and vivid in Your Lordship's recollection. That this humble attempt to convey to others that impression of which Your Lordship can require no renewal, may be honoured with your indulgent approbation, is the anxious wish of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

most respectful,

and obedient Servant,

THOMAS AMYOT.

Downing-Street,

June 4, 1812.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following biographical sketch, being intended to serve merely as an introduction to a collection of speeches, is chiefly confined to the events of Mr. Windham's political life. The writer indeed is ready to confess that his views were narrowed rather by necessity than by choice. As his theme was grateful to him, he would have been glad to forget that he was writing, not a book, but a preface ; and that in such an undertaking, all he could reasonably hope for was, to excite curiosity, not to gratify it. That it is intended to be gratified hereafter, from the pen of Mr. GEORGE ELLIS, the Reader will undoubtedly learn with pleasure. In the meantime, the sketch now presented, if it be found faithful in the outline, may perhaps not be unwelcome to the common observer, though the connoisseur, who demands the scale, the colouring, and the finish of a complete portrait, must be content to wait a little longer for the fulfillment of his wishes.

The Writer has only to add his best thanks to those friends and relations of Mr. Windham who have most obligingly favoured him with communications, and whose names will appear in the course of the following pages.

SOME

ERRATA.

Page 2. last line but one, for *become* read *became*.

45. line 4. from the bottom, after *accompanied*, add *that of*.

84. 8. after *imitation of*, add *this*.

86. 5. for *Rowney*, read *Romney*.

87. 13. for *betowed* read *bestowed*.

88. 9. of note; for *unwillingly* read *unwilling*.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF
THE LIFE
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM WINDHAM.

WILLIAM WINDHAM, the lamented subject of this narrative, was the descendant of a line of ancestors which is traced to a very remote period. The name is derived from a town in Norfolk, generally written *Wymondham*, but pronounced *Windham*, at which place the family appears to have been settled as early as the eleventh, or the beginning of the twelfth century, Ailward de Wymondham having been a person of some consideration in the time of Henry the First. His posterity remained there till the middle of the fifteenth century, when one of them, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, purchased considerable estates on the north-east coast of Norfolk, in Felbrigg and its neighbourhood, which, from that time, became their principal residence. Among the Windhams of Felbrigg, many might be enumerated who

distinguished themselves by services to their country in the army, the navy, and on the judicial bench ; and from them descended not only the present noble family of Egremont, but others of considerable eminence, long since settled in distant parts of the kingdom, by whom the name of Windham has been preserved, though generally with a slight deviation from that orthography.

Colonel William Windham, an inheritor of the Felbrigg patrimony, and the son of Ash Windham, who had represented the county of Norfolk in Parliament, was a man of versatile talents and an ardent mind. He was the associate of the wits of his time, the friend and admirer of Garrick, and the distinguished patron of all manly exercises. In his father's lifetime, he had lived much on the continent, particularly in Spain. Of his proficiency in the language of that country, he gave proofs in some printed observations on Smollett's Translation of Don Quixote. While abroad, he entered as a Hussar officer into the service of the deserted, though finally successful, Maria Teresa, Queen of Hungary. This commission, at his father's desire, he at length very unwillingly relinquished ; but his military ardour was revived many years afterwards, on the passing of the Act which established the Militia Force upon its present footing. Upon that occasion, which happened in the year 1757, he assisted his friend, the first Marquis Townshend, in forming a battalion of Militia in his native county, of which he afterwards became Lieutenant-Colonel. Though his military education had not been regular,

he not only proved an active and skilful officer, but distinguished himself as the author of a "Plan of Discipline composed for the use of the Militia of the county of Norfolk," which was much esteemed, and generally adopted by other corps of the establishment*. Unhappily Colonel Windham's feeble con-

* This work, which was published in 1760, is comprized in a quarto volume, and contains many plates, serving to illustrate the plan of exercise which Colonel Windham recommended. The dedication, "To the Right Honourable the Earl of Shaftsbury, and the other noble Lords who have exerted themselves in their respective counties as Lord-Lieutenants in the execution of the Militia Acts," is subscribed by Lord Townshend, who notices Colonel Windham in terms of warm commendation. An advertisement, signed "W. Windham," is dated the 24th August 1759, at Hilsa Barracks, to which place the battalion had proceeded upon the threat of an invasion; having the distinguished honour of being the first Militia corps that had marched out of its own county.

That Colonel Windham's military instructions to his brother-officers were not always observed according to his wishes, may be shewn by a ludicrous anecdote, which the writer of this narrative received from an old officer of the battalion, lately dead. The corps, on its march, having to pass in parade order before the King at Kensington, the Colonel took particular pains to perfect his officers in the manner of the salute. To his great mortification, however, he observed that one of his captains (an honest country-gentleman) marched with infinite composure past His Majesty, without bestowing on him the slightest notice. Upon being called to account for this negligence, the officer denied the truth of the charge. "Do you think, Colonel Windham," said he, "I did not know the King as well as you did? How could I miss him? Had not he the G. R. on his breast?" The worthy Captain had actually saluted a Beefeater!

stitution by no means seconded the ardour and activity of his mind. A victim to a consumptive habit, he died on the 30th of October 1761, when only in the 44th year of his age,

He had married Mrs. Lukin, the mother of the present Dean of Wells, by whom he had but one son, WILLIAM WINDHAM, who was born in 1750, on the 3d of May (old style), in Golden Square. At seven years of age, young Windham had been placed at Eton, where he remained till he was about sixteen; distinguishing himself by the vivacity and brilliancy of his talents, among school-fellows of whom many were afterwards highly eminent for their genius and acquirements. He was the envy of the school for the quickness of his progress in study, as well as its acknowledged leader and champion in all athletic sports and youthful frolicks. The late Dr. Barnard, then Head-master, and afterwards Provost of Eton College, used to remark when Fox and Windham had become conspicuous in the senate, that they were the last boys he had ever flogged. Their offence was, that of stealing off together to see a play acted at Windsor. The Sub-master, Dr. Dampier, afterwards Dean of Durham (the father of the present Bishop of Ely), was Mr. Windham's guardian, in conjunction with David Garrick, Mr. Price of Hereford, and the celebrated Benjamin Stillingfleet, who is noticed by Colonel Windham, in the introduction to his "Plan of Discipline," as having contributed some learned information respecting the antiquity of the use of music in war.

On leaving Eton, in 1766, he was placed in the university of Glasgow, under the tuition of Dr. Anderson, Professor of Natural History, and the learned Dr. Robert Simson, the editor of Euclid. Here he remained about a year, having by diligent application to study laid the foundation of his profound mathematical acquirements. He was then removed to Oxford, where, in September 1767, he was entered a gentleman-commoner of University college, Sir Robert Chambers being his tutor. While at Oxford, he took so little interest in public affairs, that, as the writer of this narrative has heard him relate, it was the standing joke of one of his contemporaries, that "Windham would never know who was prime minister." This disinclination to a political life, added to a modest diffidence in his own talents, led him at the period which is now spoken of, to reject an offer which, by a youth not more than twenty years of age, might have been considered as a splendid one;—that of being named secretary to his father's friend, Lord Townshend, who had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

After four years residence, he left Oxford in 1771. He always retained feelings of gratitude towards *Alma Mater*, and preserved to the last an intimate acquaintance and correspondence with some of the most distinguished resident members. He did not, however, take his master's degree till 1783. That of doctor of laws was conferred on him in 1793, at the installation of the Duke of Portland. It is related that on this occasion, almost the whole assembly rose from

their seats, when he entered the theatre, and received him with acclamations of applause *. Nor was his memory forgotten at the late installation of Lord Grenville; for in the recitations made on that occasion, due honours were paid to the genius, taste, and acquirements of which the public had recently been deprived.

After leaving Oxford, he passed some time on the continent. In 1773, a voyage of discovery towards the North-Pole having been projected and placed under the command of the late Lord Mulgrave (then Commodore Phipps), Mr. Windham, with his characteristic ardour, joined as a passenger in the expedition. To his great mortification, however, a continued sea-sickness of an unusually severe and debilitating kind, rendered it necessary for him to be landed on the coast of Norway. Here, accompanied by a faithful servant now living, who had attended him from his childhood, he passed through a series of adventures and "hair-breadth 'scapes," in which his courage and humanity were conspicuous. The recital of them might agreeably occupy a considerable space in a work less limited in its nature and extent than the present.

* It will here be proper to observe, that for many of the dates and facts noticed in this early part of the narrative, the author is indebted to a brief biographical memoir, which, soon after Mr. Windham's death, his highly-valued friend Mr. Malone presented to those persons who were most intimately connected with the lamented subject of it. The manner in which Mr. Malone executed his task leaves nothing to regret, except that he did not impose on himself a more comprehensive one. Had he done this, the attempts of others would have been worse than superfluous.

His earliest essay as a public speaker was occasioned by a call which was made on the country, for a subscription in aid of Government, to be applied towards carrying on the war with our American colonies. It was on the 28th of January 1778, at a meeting of gentlemen of the county of Norfolk, held at Norwich, that Mr. Windham gave the first promise of that eminence which he afterwards attained as an orator and statesman. Of his speech upon this occasion, a report has fortunately been preserved, and though it must not be compared with later specimens of his eloquence, it may be admitted to exhibit some proofs of acuteness, dexterity, and vigour. As the earliest effort of a distinguished orator, it is at least a curiosity; and on that account the report of the proceedings of the meeting will have a place allotted to it in this work *. It is copied from a provincial paper of the times, (*The Norfolk Chronicle*,) and considering that the talent of reporting debates was not then a common one, and was certainly little practised in the country, it will be thought perhaps not altogether ill-executed; though there can be no doubt that Mr. Windham's eloquence, which was long remembered in the county, suffered not a little in its way to the press. It will be sufficient in this place to notice, that the part which he took was in opposition to the subscriptions, and to the war itself; and that his friend and his father's friend, the first Marquis Townshend, who had himself proposed the measure of the subscription, bore in his

* See the Appendix to this narrative (A).

reply, the warmest testimony to the abilities, knowledge, eloquence, and integrity, of his young antagonist. The result of the meeting was, that those who remained unconvinced by Mr. Windham's arguments, entered into the proposed subscription; while those who had opposed the measure withdrew to another Inn, where they framed a strong protest against its principle and object.

Some time before the event which has been last noticed, he had entered himself as an officer in the western battalion of Norfolk militia. In this character, he proved that he inherited the military turn and talents of his father, to whom the very corps in which he served had been so greatly indebted for its formation and discipline. When the militia were called out in 1778, Mr. Windham held the rank of major, and those who remember him in that post, bear ample testimony to his zeal, expertness, and personal activity. On his battalion being ordered to march from Norwich, to be quartered in the adjoining county, he shewed an instance of resolution, which, as it made considerable impression in the country where it happened, must not be passed over in silence. The marching guinea, as it is called, was, contrary to Major Windham's advice, ordered by the Lieutenant-colonel not to be paid till the corps should have actually marched out of the county. The men, however, became clamorous for immediate payment, and proceeded to open mutiny. On their being assembled near the Castle at Norwich, Major Windham (in the absence of the Lieutenant-colonel) ordered

them to march ; but instead of obeying this command, they grounded their arms, and insisted on the payment of their guineas. The order being repeated in a very resolute tone, some of them prepared to attend to it ; when a man stepped out of the ranks, and reproved them for their want of firmness. This man Major Windham seized with his own hand, in order to commit him a prisoner to the Guard-house, and in this attempt, assisted by some of the men belonging to his own company, he at length succeeded, though amidst a shower of stones, and in defiance of the interruption offered by the soldiers, and the populace in their train, three of whom he was compelled to silence by blows. As a rescue seemed likely to be attempted, the Major determined to remain with his prisoner all night. At four in the morning, the expected attack was begun by a party of the militia, with fixed bayonets. On their demanding the prisoner to be given up, Major Windham, standing at the door, with his sword drawn, plainly told them that while he had life to defend the Guard-house, the offender should not be allowed to escape. The soldiers, encouraged by the mob, were now proceeding to acts of violence, when the prisoner, stepping forward, requested them not to hurt his Major, who was the best of men, and declared that if they released him, he would again surrender himself into custody. This declaration contributed to appease the mutineers, who, however, were not effectually reduced to obedience, until the civil power had found it necessary to interfere ; after which the battalion proceeded on its march to South-

would and Aldborough, two small towns on the Suffolk coast.

This intrepid conduct only served to increase the respect of the corps towards him, while they were desirous to forget the occasion which had called for it. By his humanity, as well as by his courage, he secured their esteem, having, as far as lay in his power, discountenanced corporal punishments, which were then more frequently inflicted in the army than at present. But his useful services as a militia officer were soon brought to a close. It happened, on a march, that imprudently, and in a sort of frolic, he joined two brother-officers in riding through a deep rivulet, after which they were obliged to keep on their wet clothes for many hours. The consequences of this adventure were fatal to one of the party, who died soon afterwards;—another, now living, is said to have saved himself by a timely application of brandy;—while Mr. Windham was thrown into a fever of a most alarming kind, from the effects of which it is certain that his constitution never thoroughly recovered. For many days he kept his bed at Bury St. Edmund's, without any hopes being entertained of his recovery. At length, he was thought to have regained strength enough to undertake a tour on the Continent, which was recommended for the re-establishment of his health. He accordingly employed nearly two years of his life in a journey through Switzerland and Italy.

From this tour he returned at a critical moment, in September 1780. The Parliament had just been

dissolved, and Sir Harbord Harbord (the late Lord Suffield), who had represented Norwich for more than twenty years, had been obliged to relinquish his hopes there, in consequence of a powerful coalition which his colleague Mr. Bacon (one of the Lords of Trade) had formed with Mr. Thurlow, a citizen of the place, and a brother of the Lord Chancellor. But the friends of Sir Harbord being determined not to give him up tamely, invited him back again, and placed him in nomination, jointly with Mr. Windham, whom they supposed to be then out of the kingdom, but whose vigorous speech against the American war had made so strong an impression on them that his absence had not weakened his popularity. It happened, singularly enough, that, without the least knowledge of what had just passed in his favour, he arrived at Norwich, in his way from London to Felbrigg, just three days before the poll commenced. It was too late, however, to secure his election; but his colleague, Sir Harbord Harbord, was returned with Mr. Bacon; while Mr. Windham, with all the disadvantages of his situation, had the satisfaction of counting a very respectable poll, as well as of securing warm assurances of support, whenever a future occasion might require it.

Though he did not obtain a seat in Parliament, he lived from this time much in town, and connected himself with some of the most eminent political and literary men of the day. Before he made his tour to the Continent, he had become a member of the celebrated Literary Club. On his return, he cemented

his friendships with the leading members of that Society, and more particularly with its two most distinguished ornaments, Dr. Johnson and Mr. Burke. For the former he entertained sentiments of the highest respect and regard, which the Doctor appears to have returned with equal warmth. The high commendation with which Johnson noticed him, in a letter to Dr. Brocklesby, though it has been often repeated, ought not here to be omitted. "Mr. Windham," said he, "has been here to see me;—he came I think forty miles out of his way, and staid about a day and a half; perhaps I may make the time shorter than it was. Such conversation I shall not have again till I come back to the regions of literature, and there Windham is *inter stellas Luna minores* *." This letter was written at Dr. Taylor's house at Ashbourne. An eulogium like this, proceeding from a literary giant of seventy, certainly no professor of the art of praising, must be thought a valuable testimony to the merits of a young man, who could hardly be said to have yet rendered himself eminent on the stage of public life †.

* Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. iv. p. 374. 3d edition.

† At a still earlier period, Mr. Windham's character was duly appreciated by a writer of no ordinary class, in the letters first published in 1779, under the name of the younger Lord Lyttelton. After describing the most conspicuous wits of the day, and comparing their respective powers in conversation, the author says to his correspondent, "It surprises me that you should leave Windham out of your list, who (observe my prophecy) will become one of the ablest and most shining characters that the latter part of this age will produce. I hazard little in such a presentiment; his talents, judgment, and attainments will verify it."

When Johnson was on his death-bed, Mr. Windham manifested the kindest attention to him, by his frequent visits, as well as by lending him the services of Cawston (the faithful servant before alluded to), who sat up with Johnson the night before his death. The funeral was attended by Mr. Windham, whom his deceased friend had remembered in a codicil to his will, by the bequest of a book * selected from his library.

Of Mr. Burke, it is needless to say, that, during a long-tryed friendship, political and personal, he found in Mr. Windham a faithful associate, and warm admirer. Their opinions seldom differed; but on a highly important occasion, hereafter to be noticed, upon which they did differ, such was Mr. Windham's deference to the wisdom and experience of his friend, that he surrendered his judgment to Mr. Burke's. From his connection with this eminent man, and with his old school-fellow Mr. Fox, he now became, though out of Parliament, a sort of member of the party then in opposition, or rather of that branch of it of which the Marquis of Rockingham was considered as the leader. In this character, he was strongly solicited to become a candidate for Westminster, whenever a vacancy should take place. The proposal was at first rather agreeable to him, but as his opinions on the then popular question of Parliamentary Reform widely differed from those of his intended constituents,

* *Poetæ Græci Heroici per Henricum Stephanum.* See Boswell, vol. iv. p. 431, 3d edit.

he seems to have gladly availed himself of an opportunity of declining the proffered honour. His own account of this transaction will be found in the following letter, which he addressed to a gentleman in Norwich (the late E. Norgate Esq.), who was a vigilant promoter of his interests in the latter city :

“ *Queen Anne Street,*

“ DEAR SIR,

5th June 1782.

“ You have heard, no doubt, from the papers, as well as from a letter or two of mine sent to Norwich, a general account of my transactions, with respect to becoming a candidate for Westminster. In the whole business, from the first mention of it soon after the general election, to the present occasion, I had remained nearly passive ; not thinking a seat for Westminster an offer to be declined, if attainable upon easy terms, nor considering it as an object to be pursued through the medium of much difficulty or expence. This intention of leaving matters to their own operation, produced at first by the considerations above mentioned, was confirmed afterwards by another feeling, when, by the management of some particular persons, a resolution was carried at one of the general meetings for putting up Mr. Pitt, in case of a vacancy. After that, propriety required that a renewal of our correspondence should come as a formal invitation from them ; and partly in that form it was about to come, that is, as a resolution of the Westminster Committee, without any sort of application from me ; when, upon inquiry into the general sentiments of the

people on the question of Parliamentary Reform, by which, though my election could not have been prevented, my situation, upon the whole, would have been rendered unpleasant; and from the reflection that, on a vacancy happening in the meanwhile at Norwich, a person might be chosen who could not afterwards be set aside, I determined not to wait till a resolution of the committee might make refusal more difficult, but to forestal their deliberations, by a letter declining the honour that might be intended me. The reasons assigned in my letter were, the difference of opinion that prevailed in some of the independent interest with respect to myself, destroying that unanimity of choice, without which I should not be ambitious of a seat at Westminster; and my disagreement, signified in pretty explicit terms, with many of the opinions that seemed then to be popular. I should flatter myself, that no part of this transaction can have prejudiced my interest at Norwich, and that the conclusion ought rather to have promoted it.

I beg to be remembered to all friends; and I am,
dear Sir,

Your obedient and faithful Servant,

W. WINDHAM."

At the date of the preceding letter, Mr. Windham's friends had just attained office, upon the resignation of Lord North and the cabinet which had conducted the American war. The Marquis of Rockingham was placed at the head of the new administration, but his death, which took place on the 1st July 1782, and

the elevation of Lord Shelburne to the vacant post, induced Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, with the rest of the Rockingham party, to resign their situations. Mr. Windham's opinion was strongly in favour of this course, as appears by a letter, also addressed to Mr. Norgate, from which the following is an extract :

“ *Queen Anne Street,*

4th July 1782.

“ You feel no doubt at Norwich, as at every other place, a share of the general consternation into which all good men are thrown by the death of Lord Rockingham. There could be no time in which the loss of such a character as his, must not have been severely felt ; but now it falls with a weight that *crushes*. The very existence of that interest which has maintained the cause of the country since the Revolution, is in danger of terminating in his person. The only hope and endeavour must be, in my humble opinion, to keep the troops together, by withdrawing them from action for a time, and leaving the enemy to pursue his operations, till they can have recovered their spirits, and retrieved their losses, sufficiently to make a new attack. Some of the most considerable amongst them are strongly of that opinion, and urge the immediate resignation of their places, if Lord Shelburne is to be at the head of affairs. Others are of opinion that they should still continue in, in order to complete the good they have begun, and not quit the public service till his conduct shall have driven them from it. The advocates for either opinion are actuated by per-

fectly honest motives. I am, for my own part, clearly for the sentiments of the former, and think there can be neither credit nor safety to themselves, nor consequently final advantage to the country, in their continuing in office. The danger of continuing is, that they will miss an opportunity of breaking off with credit and effect, and never find another."

By the famous coalition of Mr. Fox and his friends with Lord North and the remains of the former ministry, Lord Shelburne, after effecting a general peace, was driven from his post in April 1783. Under the new ministry, of which the Duke of Portland was the nominal head, Mr. Windham accepted the office of Chief Secretary to the Earl of Northington, then appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. An anecdote, which has been often repeated, is connected with his acceptance of this appointment. On his expressing to his friend Dr. Johnson, some doubts whether he could bring himself to practise the arts which might be thought necessary in his new situation, the Doctor humourously replied, "Don't be afraid, Sir; you will soon make a very pretty rascal*." It appears, however, that Mr. Windham's doubts were not ill founded. He yielded up his secretaryship to Mr. Pelham (now Earl of Chichester) in August 1783, about four months after his appointment; and his resignation is ascribed, in a late publication†, to a cer-

* Boswell, vol. iv. p. 208, 3d edit.

† Hardy's Memoirs of the Earl of Charlemont, p. 254.

tain distribution of patronage by the Viceroy, in favour of the old court party, which had given a just offence to Lord Charlemont and his friends, who had been the best supporters of the Whigs of the mother-country before they came into office. The writer alluded to relates, that "Mr. Windham, who had served as a bond of union, on the Viceroy's first coming to Ireland, between him and Lord Charlemont, now wisely preferred the county of Norfolk to the Phoenix Park near Dublin, and retired from his situation. Lord Charlemont had long known and esteemed him as an accomplished, amiable man. This secession added much to his (Lord C.'s) chagrin, as might reasonably be expected." In a letter, dated Dublin, 26th August 1783, which at the time found its way anonymously into a newspaper, but which is believed to have been written by a gentleman who had good means of knowing the facts connected with this resignation, it is stated to have been occasioned by a want of "due requisites in Mr. Windham to become a supple and venal courtier." "Some assert," this writer adds, "that his resignation was chiefly owing to a coolness between him and a certain great personage (the Lord Lieutenant). — Mr. Windham is a man of deep science, and of great penetration and abilities; — the great personage likes a deep bottle — to penetrate a cork — and has strong abilities of bearing wine. The one was an enemy to thinking; — the other to drinking, — and so they parted."

The same writer adds an anecdote which ought not to be omitted. It is given in these words: "The

following circumstance respecting Mr. Windham is an absolute fact, and shews more and more the loss this country (Ireland) has experienced by his resignation. A few days previous to his leaving Ireland, a gentleman from England waited on him with a strong letter of recommendation from Mr. Burke, requesting Mr. Windham would embrace an opportunity of presenting him with some little preferment that might fall in the gift of government. Mr. Windham assured the gentleman he should be happy to present a person so strongly recommended by Mr. Burke with a much greater piece of preferment than that requested; but that it was his fixed determination, should he remain in the secretaryship (of which he had some doubts), to give every place in his power to Irishmen; as he had long been persuaded that the natives had the best right to the bread of their own land." Whatever may have been the cause of this resignation, which has, by other accounts, been attributed to ill health, it appears that on this, and on a former occasion, when he visited his friend, Lord Townshend, during his Vice-royalty, he was long enough in Ireland to form many valuable friendships, which lasted till his death.

On the downfall of the coalition ministry, occasioned by Mr. Fox's famous bill for new modelling the government of India, a new cabinet was appointed at the close of 1783, with Mr. Pitt presiding at the Treasury. But the ex-ministers still retaining a considerable majority in the House of Commons, it was found necessary to dissolve the Parliament in March 1784. On this occasion, Mr. Windham claimed the

promises of his friends at Norwich, but soon found that Mr. Fox and his party had lost much of their popularity in that city, as well as in most other parts of the kingdom; particularly amongst the dissenters, by whom they had before been warmly supported. The question too of Parliamentary Reform, which had already stood in his way at Westminster, was become a highly popular one amongst his Norwich friends. Still he was not to be dismayed. On the contrary, his intrepidity rose with the difficulties which threatened him; for, besides avowing at a public meeting his dislike to the prevailing doctrines of Reform, he published a very manly address to the electors, in which he spurned the popularity to be acquired by a servile accommodation to changes of public opinion, and declared that he should, on all occasions, make his own dispassionate judgment the sole and fixed rule of his conduct. Dangerous as it must at first have appeared, the boldness of this address (which gave a just presage of his future political course) met with a generous reward from those who could not approve of his public connexions; and he had, on the result of the election, the satisfaction of being returned by a majority of sixty-four over his antagonist, the late Honourable Henry Hobart *. In this contest, his success was remarkable,

* So little was he disposed to court the favour of the people by any concessions, that his mode of canvassing them on this occasion was ridiculed by the opposite party in a humorous parody of some scenes of Shakspeare's *Coriolanus*, in which he was made to ask "the voices, the sweet voices," of the Norwich citizens, much in

for in almost every other popular election, the coalition party were totally defeated. In the county of Norfolk, Mr. Windham warmly exerted himself in the cause of his friend Mr. Coke; but that gentleman, notwithstanding the great influence he derived from his large property, and many estimable qualities, was driven from the field by the same cry which, in other places, proved fatal to Lord John Cavendish, General Conway, Mr. Byng, and many other friends of Mr. Fox, who, by a humourous allusion to the book of that title, gained the appellation of "Fox's Martyrs."

There certainly was no part of Mr. Windham's political course that he reviewed with more satisfaction than this early stage of it. The writer of this narrative has frequently heard him, in the latter period of his life, deplore in strong terms the system which began and finally prevailed in this contest between the Crown and the Commons; — a system which he always considered as ruinous to the best interests of the country. The ministers, however, were completely triumphant; their majorities in both houses were large and decisive; and the opposition, strong as they continued to be in talents, were so reduced in numbers,

the lofty style of the Roman General. It should be observed, however, that on other occasions he was an admirable election canvasser. The easy and manly frankness of his address was not more agreeable to the higher classes than to the common people. Without talking their language, he appeared fully to enter into their views and feelings, and would often good humouredly maintain an argument with them in their own way when he found them prepared to resist his solicitations.

as to be no longer formidable in any other way than by occasionally putting the ministers to the necessity of defending themselves by argument.

Mr. Windham made his first speech in Parliament on the 9th of February 1785, early in the second session after his election. The question which occasioned this trial of his powers, was the celebrated one of the Westminster scrutiny. It will be necessary to recollect, that Mr. Fox had been successful on the poll for that city by a majority of more than two hundred votes, but Sir Cecil Wray had demanded a scrutiny, which the High Bailiff had proceeded upon, and in the mean time, at his own discretion, had delayed making his return to the writ. Against this measure, Mr. Fox (who had been returned for another place) had in vain called for the censure of the house, in the preceding session. The scrutiny slowly proceeded, and the return was still withheld. At the commencement of the second session, the assessors who had been appointed by the High Bailiff were examined at the bar of the house concerning the delay; and it was in the support of a motion, grounded upon this examination, and calling upon the Bailiff for an immediate return, that Mr. Windham made the speech which is here alluded to. He rose immediately after Mr. Pitt had spoken on the other side, and he was followed by Mr. Fox, who congratulated the house "on the accession of the abilities which they had witnessed." The scanty report, however, which has been preserved of this speech, will certainly disappoint the reader; nor was it till late in Mr. Windham's

parliamentary career, that his peculiar style of eloquence was sufficiently understood or attended to by those who furnished the public with the substance of the debates. The motion for requiring the return was lost, and the High Bailiff received the sanction of the house for proceeding in the scrutiny, though with an intimation that it ought to be prosecuted with more expedition. It was not till some time afterwards that, upon a contrary vote of the House of Commons, the scrutiny was abandoned, and Mr. Fox returned duly elected. He subsequently, in a court of law, recovered 2000*l.* damages from the High Bailiff, for the loss he had sustained by the scrutiny.

In the course of the same session, Mr. Windham spoke in opposition to Mr. Pitt's Shop tax, which he pronounced to be partial, oppressive, and unjust, on the same grounds upon which he afterwards uniformly reprobated all bills that had for their object a taxation, not on the community at large, but on certain classes of men invidiously selected from it*.

In 1786, he joined in the resistance which was successfully made against the grand scheme for fortifying the Dock-yards of Portsmouth and Plymouth, brought forward by the Duke of Richmond (then Master-General of the Ordnance) and supported by the ministers.

* This speech, and some others which will be noticed in the course of the narrative, will not be found in the following collection, the reports of them which have been preserved being very imperfect and wholly unsatisfactory. The omission of the speeches themselves renders it the more necessary to allude to them in attempting the history of Mr. Windham's parliamentary career.

Fortifications in general, Mr. Windham represented as insecure and dangerous means of defence, of all others the most unfit for this country to adopt; and the plan proposed would only lavish 700,000*l.* of the public money for the purchase of alarm and danger. It happened that, on the division upon this question, the numbers were equal, and the measure of the ministers was rejected by the casting vote of the speaker. It should here be observed, that the objection which Mr. Windham urged against fortifications in general, considered with a view to our insular situation, could not be applied to that description of them which he afterwards strongly recommended for the defence of our coast; namely, the Martello Towers; — which, besides being comparatively cheap and simple in their construction, are not capable of being used against us with any effect, even if they should fall into the hands of the enemy.

It now becomes necessary to advert to the share which Mr. Windham took in the impeachment of Mr. Warren Hastings, for his conduct while administering the government of India. This measure, though considered in its time to be of the very first importance, is now only remembered by the unparalleled combination of talents called forth in the prosecution of it. Of the impeachment itself, it is perhaps needless to say more than merely to remark, that, though it was countenanced by Mr. Pitt, directed by Mr. Burke, and supported by almost unrivalled efforts of eloquence on the part of that extraordinary man, as well as of Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Fox, it lingered on from session to

session, till even its power to excite attention seemed exhausted; and it was at length dismissed almost to oblivion, by the very few peers who could be induced to give a vote upon it. The particular charge, however, which was intrusted to Mr. Windham's management, must be concisely noticed. It alleged perfidy and oppression in the Governor-General, in the breach of a treaty which had been made with the Nabob Fyzoola Khan in 1774, after his territories had been invaded by the Company's troops, and the sum of 150,000*l.* had been paid by him upon ratifying the Convention. The case, as it was stated, was certainly one which could not fail to call forth indignation from a man of whom a high sense of honour, and a warm sympathy with the injured, were striking characteristics. In maintaining this charge, Mr. Windham extended his parliamentary reputation; and throughout the proceedings against Mr. Hastings, he fought by the side of Mr. Burke, always ready as well as proud to defend him against the attacks which were personally, and sometimes coarsely, made upon him, as the acknowledged leader of the impeachment.

Late in the autumn of 1788, the King became afflicted with the disorder with which recently he has again been visited, and under which he still unhappily labours. On this occasion, Mr. Windham warmly entered into the feelings, and supported the opinions, of his political friends, who contended, both for the hereditary right of the Prince of Wales to assume the Regency, and, during that assumption, for his full enjoyment of the royal prerogatives, unfettered by re-

strictions. On each of these points, however, the minister was triumphant. The right of the two Houses of Parliament "to provide means of supplying the defect of the personal exercise of the royal authority," was recognized in a formal resolution; and the Prince of Wales, by an exertion of this right, was to be empowered to administer the royal authority, under the title of Regent, subject to limitations, which restrained him from granting peerages, reversions, and offices for life. But before the bill for this purpose had passed through the forms of the House of Lords, it was rendered unnecessary by His Majesty's happy recovery, which was announced to parliament on the 10th of March 1789.

Towards the end of this session, Mr. Windham called the attention of government to a requisition from France, which was then suffering the greatest distress from a scarcity of grain. The object of this requisition was, to be supplied with 20,000 sacks of flour from this country. So small a boon ought to be granted, he thought, from motives of humanity, and might be safely granted; but a committee of the House of Commons having decided against it, the ministers, though they professed themselves disposed to afford the relief sought for, would not, after such a decision, undertake to grant it upon their own responsibility. The leading part which Mr. Windham took in favour of this requisition occasioned amongst some of his constituents at Norwich a considerable clamour. He allayed the storm by a printed letter, addressed "To those of the citizens of Norwich who are most likely to be affected

by an increase in the price of provisions, and to whom a handbill containing what is called ' Mr. Windham's Speech,' &c. may be supposed to be addressed." This letter, on account of its good sense and good humour, its acuteness and spirit, seems well to deserve republication *.

In the session of 1790 (4th March) he gave his firm and decided opposition to Mr. Flood's motion for a Reform of Parliament. It will be remembered that upon this question he had made up his mind at an early period; and it will hereafter be seen that the opinions he then formed, remained unshaken to the close of his life. On the present occasion, he differed from Mr. Fox, and his principal political connexions in that house, Mr. Burke excepted. His speech was pronounced by Mr. Pitt to contain " much ingenuity, and in some respects as much wisdom and argument as he had ever heard in the walls of that house." Mr. Pitt, however, professed himself to remain, after the most mature deliberation, a firm and zealous friend to parliamentary reform; though, fearing that the cause might suffer disgrace from its being brought forward at an improper moment, he recommended Mr. Flood to withdraw his motion. Mr. Windham, in the course of his speech on this occasion, made a strong allusion to the " swarms of strange, impracticable notions which had lately been wafted over to us from the Continent, to prey like locusts on the fairest flowers of our soil; — to destroy the boasted beauty and verdure of

* See the Appendix to this narrative (B).

our constitution." It appears, therefore, that, at this early stage of it, he foresaw the evil results of the French Revolution.

In June 1790, the parliament was dissolved and Mr. Windham was again elected for Norwich; after a very slight opposition, which had been occasioned chiefly by a supposed but disavowed coalition of his interest with that of the late Mr. Hobart.

During the first session of the new parliament, he strongly reprobated the conduct of the ministers, in relation to their armaments against Spain and Russia, which had respectively been occasioned by disputes concerning the possession of Nootka Sound and Oczakow. On a renewal of the latter question, in the succeeding session, he again forcibly expressed his disapprobation of the measures which had been pursued by government. It should also be noticed, for the sake of recording hereafter a proof of the consistency of his sentiments on another subject, that in February 1791 he earnestly supported a bill which was brought into the House of Commons by Mr. Mitford (now Lord Redesdale), for the purpose of relieving from certain penalties and disabilities the protesting Catholic Dissenters of England.

It now becomes necessary to advert to an event, which, though it cannot justly be said to have occasioned any change in the general turn of Mr. Windham's political opinions, had ultimately the effect of separating him from many of the persons with whom he had hitherto been acting. This event was the French Revolution. On the commencement and early

progress of it, he had been more than a common observer ; he had, for a short time, been an actual spectator of the scene. When we recollect what the first feelings were, which the new and imposing appearance of things in France had generally excited, not only in this country, but throughout Europe, it will not seem surprising if Mr. Windham did not instantly foresee all the mischiefs that were about to spring from it. We have already found, however, that at so early a period as March 1790, he was awake to the danger, and prepared to meet it. Soon after that declaration of his sentiments, the memorable publication of Mr. Burke's "Reflections" produced what may be called a new division of the nation. To one part of the country, it communicated alarm and suggested precaution, while from the other, it served to call forth an avowal of opinions, which before were rather suspected as possible, than believed really to exist ; at least, to any considerable extent. The boldness of the answers to Mr. Burke (particularly of that by Paine, contained in his celebrated "Rights of Man") fully confirmed the apprehensions which had been raised, and marked out a definite line of boundary between what were now to be the two great parties of this country and the world.

Of these parties, which, in the warmth of their opposition, were branded with the reproachful titles of "Alarmists" and "Jacobins," it will not seem strange that Mr. Windham should have taken his side amongst the former. His dread of popular innovations upon the constitution he had frequently, and indeed

uniformly expressed, as often as an occasion had called for it. We have seen that, in the outset of life, he sacrificed his claims upon the representation of Westminster to his dislike of the prevailing doctrine of parliamentary reform; and we have also found that, just before he obtained a seat for another place, he fairly and honourably told those who were about to choose him, that a subserviency to popular notions was not to be expected from him. The very question upon which he, at that time, differed from his constituents, was one in which he took part with the aristocracy against the temporary clamours of the people. With sentiments of this nature, so broadly avowed, and so uniformly acted upon, he might justly have been reproached with inconsistency, if he had now lent his authority to the approbation of French principles, or his voice to a cry for reform and revolution. Happily, on the contrary, he opposed both the principles and the cry, and took his stand by the side of Mr. Burke. Nor was he alone in this decision. The Duke of Portland, the Earls Fitzwilliam and Spencer, with many other persons of rank and character amongst the opposition, felt it to be their duty to support the government against the dangers with which the wide-spreading contagion of French example seemed in their judgment to threaten it.

One of the first public manifestations of this feeling was occasioned by the Proclamation against Seditious Meetings, which was issued by Government in May 1792. This measure, which was decried by Mr. Fox and many of his friends, received, on the contrary,

the full sanction, both in and out of Parliament, of the distinguished persons who have just been alluded to. At a public meeting in Norfolk, called for the purpose of voting an Address of Thanks to His Majesty for having sent forth this Proclamation, Mr. Windham took occasion to avow, in the most explicit manner, his opinions on the questions which agitated the country. He rested his support to the Proclamation chiefly on the three following grounds:—the dissemination of writings tending to render the people dissatisfied with their government—the existence of clubs, where delusive remedies were projected for supposed evils—and the correspondence of those clubs with others of the most dangerous character in Paris*.

In the beginning of 1793, the country was at war with France. It would be superfluous in this place to trace the series of outrages at Paris, which occasioned the recall of our Ambassador, and were followed by the trials and executions of the unfortunate Louis and his Queen. They were events which made a deep impression on Mr. Windham, strengthening both his abhorrence of French principles, and his conviction of the necessity of opposing the progress of them by our arms. In the sessions of 1793 and 1794, he gave, on every occasion, his unqualified support to the measures of Government for prosecuting the war, and for repressing seditious practices. And in the month of

* For a newspaper report of this speech, see the Appendix to this sketch (C).

April in the latter year, he distinguished himself in Norfolk by eloquently recommending the measure of a voluntary subscription, to be applied in the defence of the country. On this occasion, he was reminded of the conduct he had observed in 1778, with respect to subscriptions in aid of the American war; and he defended himself by adverting to the striking difference that existed between the circumstances of the two contests*.

* Though the following letter to his nephew, Captain Lukin, does not contain any general view of the questions of the day, it may, perhaps, on account of its references to them, be acceptable to the reader. The pleasure with which he appears to relate an instance of British bravery, is perfectly in character:—

“ Hill Street, March 22, 1794.

“ DEAR WILLIAM,

“ THE papers of yesterday announced your return to the Downs with some Danish vessels, arrested in consequence of the late orders. I hope it may turn out that they will be made prizes. The conduct of these Swedes and Danes is so perfectly rascally, that I have no sort of compassion for them, and none, I dare say, will be felt by those who will find such good account in this kind of neutral war. The only danger is, that they may be driven at last to join themselves openly to those to whom they are now giving every kind of clandestine assistance. Though they will find their own destruction in this, they may, in the main, considerably embarrass our operations.

“ No great stroke has yet been struck by any of the armies on the continent. Our campaign here too, in the Houses of Parliament, is pretty quiet. If it was not for the trial of Mr. Hastings, and the delay which his friends create, by insisting on the presence of the judges, and adjourning the proceedings in consequence, till after the circuit, we might be set at liberty in a few weeks; and

About this time, an offer was made by Mr. Pitt's administration, to form a new cabinet which should include the leaders of the Whig *Alarmists*. This pro-

I should then be tempted to make an excursion towards the coast, and to meet you probably either at the Downs or at Portsmouth.

" There is another business indeed that may call me towards Norfolk. With a view to the possibility of a descent, troops of different sorts are proposed to be raised in aid of the militia; one class of which will be volunteer cavalry, composed of persons who are in a state to furnish their own horses, and till they are called out of their own county (which is to be only in the case of actual invasion) are to receive no pay, nor any thing from government, but their saddles and arms. What think you of the possibility of my raising a troop of fifty such persons, including such as part of those concerned may be willing to hire or bring with them, in addition to themselves? Should the occasion not arise in which their services will be really wanted, the trouble will be very little, as I should not propose their meeting more than once a week; and the expence would be no more nor so much as attends their weekly meetings at market. For a uniform, I would have nothing but a plain coat, such as they might wear at other times, or no more ornamented than might make them a little proud of it. I believe something of this sort I must attempt, and if it could be settled without the necessity of more attention on my part than I ought to allow myself to spare from other objects, I should not dislike to have such a troop established under my direction.

" Mr. Courtenay (the member), who dined with me yesterday, shewed me a letter which he had received from a Mr. Hayes, one of the Lieutenants, I conceive, on board the Boston, in which an interesting account is given of some of the principal circumstances of the action. It appears, by his account, that the Boston had only 200 hands, not above 30 of whom had ever before been on board, while the Ambuscade had 450. This difference I suppose must have told considerably; much more than the difference

posal Mr. Windham at first wished to be rejected; thinking that his friends and himself, by continuing out of office, could give their support to the general objects of Government more effectually and independently than they could with seats in the cabinet; and, at the same time, would be left more at liberty to declare their opinions respecting any particular measures connected with the conduct of the war, upon which there were likely to be grounds of variance. Mr. Burke, however, thought differently; his opinion was, that the usefulness of his friends to the country would depend on their being placed in situations which would give them a fair prospect of being able to direct the counsels of Government. His advice prevailed with the majority of those to whom the offer had been made, though not at first with the Duke of Portland. Arrangements were then proposed, under which Mr. Windham was to become one of the Secretaries of

of four guns which the French frigate had beyond ours. The conduct of one of the Lieutenants, Mr. Kerr, seems to have been singularly gallant. He staid on deck, after he had received a canister shot through his shoulder, and till a splinter striking him on the face altogether blinded him. The first Lieutenant too, a Mr. Edwards, though wounded badly in the hand, came up again after the Captain's death, to take the command of the ship. In a former account, it was said, I think, that he had fainted from loss of blood. It is said in this letter, that there was a French fleet in sight at the time when the Boston bore up.

"Let me hear from you when you have any thing to tell, and believe me,

"Your affectionate Uncle,

"W. WINDHAM."

State; but at length the Duke of Portland's reluctance to accept office having been overcome, it was thought proper, in consideration of his high rank and influence in the country, to place him in the office which had been intended for Mr. Windham, the latter consenting to accept the inferior one of Secretary at War, with a seat in the cabinet. The emoluments of this office amounted only to 2,480*l.* a year. The distinction of a seat in the cabinet was first annexed to it on this occasion, and has since been granted only for a few months to one of Mr. Windham's numerous successors. Lords Fitzwilliam and Spencer also joined the cabinet. Lord Loughborough (afterwards Earl of Rosslyn) had received the appointment of Lord Chancellor a few months earlier. Mr. Burke accepted a pension, which was justly due to his merits and services, and withdrew from Parliament, considering himself disqualified by age and declining health for taking an active part in the measures of Government.

On going down to Norwich in July 1794, to be re-elected, in consequence of his acceptance of office, Mr. Windham met with an opposition, which was raised in favour of Mr. Mingay, the King's counsel, but without that Gentleman's knowledge. Though Mr. Windham was completely triumphant on the poll, he found a rough reception from the populace, who considered themselves to be severely suffering by the war. On his being chaired in the evening, a stone was thrown at him, but he avoided the blow, jumped down from his chair, seized the culprit, and delivered him over into the hands of an officer.

Very soon after his acceptance of office, Mr. Windham, at the request of his colleagues, undertook a mission to our army in Flanders; for the purpose, it is understood, of explaining in confidence to the Duke of York, certain reasons which induced the ministers to make a new arrangement for the command of the forces. He sailed for Helvoetsluys in the latter end of August, and after executing the business of his mission, remained a short time at His Royal Highness's head quarters, gratifying his love of military pursuits, by a taste of a soldier's life on service*. He returned to England early in October.

* A familiar letter written by Mr. Windham, during this embassy, to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Lukin, will furnish some descriptions which the reader may think not altogether uninteresting:—

“ Berlikom, near Bois le Duc, Sept. 12, 1794.

“ THE ways of a camp life are so idle, that all the habits of business which I may be supposed to have acquired in the last two months, seem to give way before them; and I am in danger of finding myself a worse correspondent here, where I have so much to tell, and so much time for telling it, than I was in London, when occupied from morning till night, and when my occupations would leave me but little else to talk of. In fact, the pleasure of moving about in a scene so full of interest, the fatigue that is apt to follow, and the want of a comfortable room to retire to, are the causes that prove so fatal to my correspondence, and the reasons why, for want of a little occasional respite, my pleasure in this situation is less than it should be.

“ We are, as you will have learned from one of my former letters, near Bois le Duc, which is rather a large town, and a strong fortress belonging to the Dutch. About three miles from this place are the Duke's head quarters, and at four or five miles fur-

In his new capacity, Mr. Windham vindicated the measures of government in parliament with a degree of warmth and openness which by some persons was cen-

ther is the camp. The immediate place of my residence is the village where head quarters are, and I am lodged in the house of a Dutch attorney. The country about is light and sandy, affording very pleasant rides, which are not the less so from your occasionally meeting bodies of troops, of different dresses, establishments, and countries. The variety in this respect is not so great as it was last year, nor, from a number of circumstances, is the scene so interesting, after allowing even for the difference of its not being seen, as that was, for the first time. The relief which all this gives, after confinement during the summer to London, and to such business as that of the war-office, is more than you can conceive. It has given me a new stock of health; and the beauty of the autumn mornings, joined to the general idleness in which one lives by necessity, and therefore without self-reproach, has given me a feeling of youthful enjoyment, such as I now but rarely know. You cannot conceive how you would like a ride here, with the idea that if you wandered too far, and went beyond the out-posts, you might be carried off by a French patrol. It is the enjoyment that George Faulknor was supposed to describe, of a scene near Dublin, where "the delighted spectator expects every moment to be crushed by the impending rocks."

"Were public business out of the question, I should stay here probably for a week or two longer; but, as it is, my stay must be regulated by other considerations, and it is probable that the messenger whom we are waiting for impatiently may occasion my departure immediately. The general state of things is as bad as need be.

"The shooters in your part of the world must not suppose that they have all the sport to themselves. So strong is the love of mischief among men, that all the shooting of one another that is going on here, does not prevent their filling up their intervals by a little murder of partridges.

sured as indiscreet. To that sort of discretion, indeed, which consists in dissembling opinions and feelings, Mr. Windham was an utter stranger. He thought that the common maxim, "honesty is the best policy,"

"I am not the only person, probably, from the parish of Felbrigg, who is now with the army. There is a son of the family of Ransome, whom Moreton was charged some time since to make enquiry after, and who I hope is alive; though there is some reason to suppose that he is wounded. A brother of James, too, who lives with your brother, is supposed to be here, and about him I shall make enquiry.

"Farewell: I hope you are going on well at home: that Anne is recovered, and that the rest are gay.

"W. W."

In the above letter there is an allusion to a visit which he had made in the preceding year, before he was in office, to our army at Valenciennes. The paragraph which relates to a Felbrigg man, about whom his servant, Moreton, had been desired to make enquiry, is preserved as a characteristic trait of his kind attention to inferiors.

A trifling anecdote, which the author has heard Mr. Windham relate with some glee, may perhaps in this place be deemed admissible. While on this expedition, he happened to fall into conversation with an elderly Dutch clergyman, who questioned him very closely as to the establishment and discipline of the church of England. These enquiries he answered in a way that seemed satisfactory; but they were followed by others of a more puzzling nature, concerning the mechanical process (if it may so be called) by which some English preachers occasionally *manufacture* their sermons. Upon Mr. Windham's confessing his ignorance of this subject, the Dutchman, in a tone of disappointment, exclaimed, "Why then I find, Sir, after all the conversation we have had, that I have been deceived as to your profession. They told me you were an *English Minister*."

was as valuable in courts and cabinets as in the ordinary concerns in life. It is true that, by pursuing this conduct, he sometimes gave opportunities to his adversaries to turn to his disadvantage any hasty or strong expressions which might fall from him in the course of a warm debate. Among those which were imputed to him, the greatest triumph was assumed by the opposition of the day from that of "perish commerce—let the constitution live." But it is curious enough that this remarkable sentiment, which was first charged on him in a pamphlet under the fictitious signature of Jasper Wilson, and was afterwards echoed and re-echoed through the country, had in fact never been uttered by him, but was owned by Mr. Hardinge. Mr. Windham, however, though he denied having spoken the words, justified the sentiment, under the explanation which he gave of it, namely, a preference, as an *alternative*, of government, order, and the British laws, above mere wealth and commercial prosperity.

In July 1795, an expedition, composed of Emigrants, proceeded against Quiberon. For this project, which unhappily failed, Mr. Windham always held himself responsible. He thought it a most important object that an attempt should be made to assist the efforts of those Frenchmen who were bravely struggling at home against republican usurpation; and he earnestly wished that such an experiment should be tried with a far greater force than was actually employed in it. He always remained firmly of opinion that the royalist war in France had been too lightly considered by our

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government; and that if the tide had been "taken at the head," the family of Bourbon might have been restored to the throne of their ancestors. Of the extent of the war in La Vendée, which seemed to be but little known in this country, Mr. Windham took an opportunity, some years afterwards, of giving a very forcible description, in the Appendix to his speech on the Peace of Amiens*.

Upon the dissolution of parliament in 1796, Mr. Windham was, for the fourth time, chosen member for Norwich. An opposition, however, of a much more formidable nature than that in 1794, was attempted in favour of Mr. Bartlett Gurney, a banker, of considerable local influence, who was defeated by a majority of only 83. Mr. Thelwall, the celebrated political lecturer, was at Norwich during this election, and endeavoured to sharpen the contest by his popular harangues in the market place, against Mr. Windham, and the war-system of the Pitt administration.

The two following letters addressed to a friend, will furnish the reader with some of the impressions made on Mr. Windham by the state of continental affairs in 1796:

" Park Street, Westminster,

" DEAR SIR,

August 6th 1796.

" I HAVE turned in my mind what you mentioned of your views respecting Genoa, and will take the first opportunity of speaking upon the subject to Lord

* See Vol. II. of this work.

Grenville ; but I much doubt whether any situation, such as your wishes seem to point to, is likely to be found. The prospect of things in that part of the world, as well as every where else, is bad indeed. The question is, how might this have been avoided, and, what is still more to the purpose, how may it now be avoided. The opposition will say to the first, " by having remained at peace." But, besides that, that was not in our power, I should rather say, " by having resolved earlier to go to war, and by having seen better than the allies in general have done, the true nature of that war." While the French understood perfectly their own views, and have taken the straight road to universal dominion, other nations have not understood equally their own danger. The consequence is, that this danger now threatens to overwhelm them.

" Should a time arrive when the zeal and energy of individuals of all descriptions must be called for, as I foresee is likely to be the case, I shall not forget the tender which you so properly and so handsomely make of your services. I hope, should that period arrive, we shall all shew equal spirit and alacrity with the young soldier whose letter I return to you.

" I am, dear Sir,

" Your very faithful,

" and obedient Servant,

" W. WINDHAM."

" Park Street, Westminster,

" DEAR SIR,

September 21 1796.

" I RECEIVE with more grief than surprize the account you send me of the fate of your poor nephew, whose return to his friends and country I never allowed myself to count upon, any more than upon that of many other brave and promising men, employed in the same fatal climate. To the losses that happen in the field of battle one can, in some measure, reconcile one's-self, and they are comparatively small ; but the ravages of these fatal climates are so extensive and so unceasing, that one cannot bear to look to that side of the war. I will not fail to return you his letter the moment I have time to turn to it, but I cannot forbear, in the meanwhile, to offer my condolence to yourself and his other relations, on the loss of a youth in whose success and safety I had myself contracted a very lively interest.

" The calamities of war are undoubtedly very great ; but it does not follow that every transaction that may call itself Peace will ultimately be the means of diminishing them, even if it should not bring on calamities of a worse kind. Suppose, for instance, that that peace should be made upon terms so advantageous to the republick, as to give them the command of all the coast of Europe ; and, by enabling them, in consequence, to shut against us, in a great measure, all the ports of Europe, to set them up as our rivals in trade, in such circumstances as may give them a decided superiority in that respect. The jealousy of other countries, the connexion of

France with America, the rapid increase of their marine, supported by that of Spain and Holland, and supplied and pushed forward by those resources which are now expended in the maintenance of immense armies, may well give such a turn to trade and manufactures, as in a very short time to begin the operation of sinking the commercial consequence of this country, and that operation once begun, will not fail to go on very rapidly.

" You have already a proof of the effect that empire will have on trade, in the stopping up of the port of Leghorn, and the termination of all intercourse with Spain. Spain is now, and has long been, a country devoted to France, and it remains to be seen how long Portugal will be otherwise than in the same state. All these are consequences resulting from military and political ascendancy, yet I fear we may happen to find that they have a close connexion with national and commercial prosperity : so little true it is, as many are led to think, that war and commerce must always be adverse to one another.

" I will not fail to bear in mind your wishes on the different objects to which they point, should any opportunity offer of promoting them. Let me beg you to believe me, dear Sir, in the meantime, with sincere concern for the loss which you and Mrs. — have sustained,

" Your very obedient,

" and faithful Servant,

" W. WINDHAM."

In the following year (1797) Mr. Windham had to deplore the loss of his illustrious friend Mr. Burke, whose memory he ever regarded with the warmest affection, as well as the profoundest veneration. He considered the extinction of such eloquence and wisdom as a heavy misfortune to the country, in the difficulties with which it was then struggling. In a letter to Captain Lukin, dated 16 November 1797, he says, "I do not reckon it amongst the least calamities of the times, certainly not among those that affect me least, that the world has now lost Mr. Burke. Oh! how much may we rue that his counsels were not followed! Oh! how exactly do we see verified all that he has predicted."

On the 10th of July 1798, Mr. Windham married Cecilia, one of the daughters of the late Admiral Arthur Forrest, an officer who attained the highest reputation in his profession, and whose gallant exploit in the year 1758, when with three English ships he attacked and beat off seven French ones, will be ever distinguished in our naval annals. The truly amiable and excellent qualities of Mrs. Windham, and the interchange of affectionate attentions which marked this union from the commencement to the close of it, are topics upon which it would be grateful but needless to dilate.

Of Mr. Windham's political and parliamentary course, during the remainder of the period in which he continued in office with Mr. Pitt, it seems unnecessary to speak much in detail; for indeed could it be done without entering into a historical relation of the

events of the war, which would be quite inconsistent with the limited nature of the present narrative. It may be sufficient to observe generally, that he strenuously resisted every proposal which was made for seeking a peace with the French republick, as well as every measure which, under the specious name of Reform, tended, as he thought, to the subversion of the constitution. The union with Ireland at length indirectly occasioned the dissolution of the cabinet. Mr. Windham's own statement on this subject is so explicit and decisive that it may be proper to quote it here, though it will necessarily find a place in another part of the present work *. "When the proposition," said he, "for the union was first brought forward, I had strong objections to the measure, and I was only reconciled to it upon the idea that all disabilities attaching on the Catholics of Ireland were to be removed, and that the whole population would be united in interests and affections. Believing this to be the case, and finding that impediments were started to this measure much stronger than I was prepared to apprehend, I relinquished the administration, because I thought the measure indispensable to the safety of this empire." His resignation, which took place in February 1801, accompanied ^{that of} five of his colleagues; viz. Mr. Pitt, the Lord Chancellor (Loughborough), Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Dundas. In the new administration, Mr. Adding-

* See speech on the Irish Catholic Petition, Vol. II. p. 277.

ton was placed at the head of the treasury, bearing of course the acknowledged character of prime minister.

Mr. Windham had been in office nearly seven years, and during that time had effected many regulations by which the army was materially benefited. By one of these, the wives and families of soldiers serving abroad were enabled to obtain information of their relatives with much greater facility and regularity than before; and the fee which had been customary on such enquiries was abolished. The pay of subalterns, non-commissioned officers and privates, as well as the pensions to officers' widows, were increased by him; and that admirable institution, the Royal Military Asylum, owed its establishment to his humane suggestions and active exertions.

In the cabinet it appears that he had differed from Mr. Pitt and the majority of his colleagues, both with respect to the object and to the conduct of the war. He always broadly avowed the opinions which have been before referred to, and which were also maintained by Mr. Burke; namely, that the legitimate object of the war was the restoration of the House of Bourbon, and that this object could only be accomplished by giving liberal encouragement to the exertions of the Royalists in France. That he was wrong with respect to the efficacy of those means, can hardly be inferred from any actual experience of facts; for the attempts which were made to succour the Royalists owed their failure to other causes than a want of energy in the persons intended to be benefited by them. Perhaps, when we look to the contest which, with our assistance,

the people of Spain are now so gloriously maintaining, we may be inclined to think that Mr. Windham's proposition was not so extravagant as it was supposed to be; and that, with similar aid, the inhabitants of the provinces of France might have emancipated themselves and their country from the tyranny of the Jacobins of Paris. He certainly thought the war had been conducted on our part with too little attention to the purposes for which it had been originally undertaken; — that it had become a war of shifts and expedients; a contest for petty and remote objects, rather than for near and vital ones. These opinions he repeatedly expressed to some of his colleagues in long and detailed letters, which were in fact state-papers of a most valuable kind. But his differences with the cabinet, important as they were, did not induce him to relinquish office. His choice lay between those who wished to carry on the war, though in a way which he did not think the most desirable, and those who would not carry it on at all. It was clearly his duty, consistently with his opinions, to support the war itself at all events, however conducted; and to continue to use such influence as his official situation might afford him, towards recommending that system of conduct which he thought to be the true one.

The emoluments of his office were, as we have already seen, of a very trifling amount, totally inadequate indeed to the rank and station of a cabinet minister; nor was his retirement accompanied by pension or advantage of any kind. He returned, however, to private life, with the gratifying reward of his Sovereign's

marked approbation. His Majesty took an early occasion of commanding Mr. Windham's attendance at Weymouth, and honoured him, during his stay, with distinguishing proofs of kindness and esteem.

During the prorogation of Parliament in 1801, the new ministers settled preliminaries of peace with France and her allies. This measure Mr. Windham regarded, not less in the terms than in the principle, as highly dangerous to the interests of the country. On the first discussion of this subject, which was upon an Address of Thanks to His Majesty, he was unable to deliver his sentiments; but on the following day, (Nov. 4th.) when the report of the Address was brought up, he pronounced the celebrated speech * which he afterwards published in the form of a Pamphlet, subjoining to it an Appendix, which is valuable for the information it contains, as well as for the vigour with which it is composed.

The definitive treaty, which was ratified a few months afterwards, he considered to be even more censurable than the preliminaries had been; and in conformity with this opinion, he moved an Address to His Majesty on the 13th of May 1802, deploring the sacrifices which had been submitted to by the treaty, and expressing apprehensions for the safety of the empire, in the immense accession of territory, influence, and power which had been confirmed to France. He prefaced this Address with an eloquent and powerful speech, but after a debate which occupied two evenings

* See Vol. II. p. 1.

the motion was negatived by 278 votes against 22 including tellers. Lord Grenville moved a similar address in the House of Lords, which was rejected by 122 against 16. So popular was the Peace of Amiens, that only 16 peers and 22 commoners could be found to disapprove of it! Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, though on different grounds, were found amongst its supporters.

In June 1802, the ministers took advantage of a favourable moment for dissolving the Parliament, which had now completed its sixth year. The Peace of Amiens had "bought them golden opinions," which were to be "worn in their newest gloss;" and the returns from the popular elections, with some few exceptions, served to shew that the people approved of the peace and the peace-makers. Mr. Windham, on the other hand, fell a victim to the intrepidity he had shewn in opposing this darling measure. After having represented Norwich for eighteen years, he lost his seat to Mr. William Smith, one of its present members, who had been invited thither to oppose him. In his defeat, however, he had 1356 votes, falling short of his adversary's number only by eighty-three. In the farewell address which he wrote upon this occasion (and which was published in the joint names of himself and his colleague, the late Mr. Frere), he expressed his feelings in very strong and emphatic terms. The contest he described to be one of great political importance; and so the public seemed to consider it, for the loss of this election afforded matter of triumph even to the newspapers of Paris, which, for some time past, had been remarkable for their

coarse and violent attacks on Mr. Windham's antigallican opinions.

A subscription was immediately set on foot at Norwich for the purpose of bringing him forward as a candidate for the county of Norfolk ; and so powerful were the exertions of his friends, that Mr. Wodehouse, who had just before offered himself as a candidate on the same interest, was induced to withdraw himself from the field. Mr. Windham, however, withstood the solicitations of his friends, strongly as they were pressed upon him, and declined a contest which he foresaw would be wasteful and hazardous. He took his seat for the borough of St. Mawes, which the kindness of the Grenville family had secured for him as a retreat, in the event of a repulse at Norwich. His friends at the latter place, though his political connexion with them no longer existed, were unwilling to extinguish all recollection of it. They celebrated his birth-day by annual meetings, which were fully attended ; and they gave themselves the additional satisfaction of placing in their public hall, by means of a subscription, a well-executed portrait of him by the late Mr. Hoppner, from which has been taken the whole length mezzotinto print by Reynolds, now become familiar to the public eye.

During the first session of the new parliament, the bad faith of the French government, which had been the subject of his predictions, was revealed to the country by the ministers, to whom in fact it had become apparent very soon after the ratification of the Definitive Treaty. War appeared inevitable ; and

though Mr. Fox and some of his friends at first recommended that means for preventing it should be sought for through the mediation of Russia, yet, after the first shock had ceased to be felt, all ranks and descriptions of persons throughout the country prepared to engage in the new contest with alacrity and vigour. By a man influenced more by individual, and less by public feeling, than Mr. Windham was, this fulfilment of his predictions might have been considered as affording a proud triumph of opinion; but such a sentiment, if momentarily excited in him, was effectually damped by others of a graver kind. Though he had blamed the peace, he lamented but did not oppose the sudden renewal of hostilities. He regarded it as an evil, but in the choice which was then held out to us, as a less evil than the continuance of the peace would have been. The following extract from a letter which he addressed to the writer of this narrative, before the actual declaration of war had been made, and before the country had shewn the disposition which was afterwards so strongly manifested, may serve concisely to describe the impression which the anticipation of war had made upon him:—

“ *Pall Mall, May 17, 1803.*

“ A GREAT ferment is, I conclude, excited by the sort of assurance which we seem to have now, that war must take place. I say *sort of assurance*, for I can hardly yet persuade myself that something of a hope in the minds of the ministers is not still in reserve. This, at least, one may venture to say, that

unless the country be made fully sensible of its danger, and bestir itself in a way far different from what it does at present, the war can lead to nothing but disgrace and ruin, producing consequences nearly as fatal as even peace itself would have done. Nothing can be a greater mistake than to suppose that those who deplored the Peace of Amiens must therefore rejoice in the recommencement of war. One of the reasons for deploring the peace was, the foreseeing that war, whenever it should take place again, must recommence in circumstances of immense disadvantage. Still greater must those disadvantages be, if the country return to war, with no adequate feeling of its situation, and, in consequence, with no disposition to make those efforts, and to submit to those privations which can alone give it a chance of success. This only I feel certain of, that we must soon have perished in peace; and this effect at least may result from war begun even as this seems likely to be, that it may stop the progress of the ruin which was before coming fast upon us. Whatever the feeling and temper of the nation may be, our means of resistance are certainly greater than they were likely to be at a later period; including always in the estimate of the decrease of our means, the rapidly increasing power of France. When people compare the circumstances in which war is to be begun, with those in which it might have been continued a year and a half ago, they will begin perhaps to suspect that those who advised them to continue war then, were not altogether in the wrong. They certainly cannot complain that the experiment of the

peace has failed in consequence of any interruption from those who originally declared against it. They have the full blessings of their own counsels."

Deeply impressed with these sentiments, he opposed with considerable warmth the measure which Mr. Fox recommended, of seeking an adjustment of differences through the mediation of Russia; and he urged, on the contrary, the immediate adoption of the most vigorous means for the defence of the country. Of this description, however, he did not consider the measure proposed by the ministers for raising, by a scheme of ballot and substitution, what was called an Army of Reserve; nor was he disposed to approve of the indiscriminate employment of a large and expensive establishment of volunteers. His speeches on these subjects not only contain some of the most amusing specimens of his eloquence, but may be regarded, perhaps, as valuable essays on military topics, from which those who remain unconvinced by his arguments, may glean much useful information, conveyed to them in a pleasing and popular form*.

To the volunteers he was falsely represented as an enemy. He admired and uniformly extolled the spirit which they manifested in the moment of danger; as well as their total disregard of personal inconvenience and privations. But while he admitted their usefulness if employed as light independent bodies, trained

* See Vol. II.

as marksmen, and not clogged with the discipline of regulars, he lamented to see them formed into battalions, and attempted to be forced by a kind of hot-bed into troops of the line. To hang on the rear of an invading enemy, to cut off his supplies, to annoy him from concealed points by keeping up an irregular fire, were services which he conceived volunteers might easily learn and skilfully execute ; but the steady and exact discipline which is required from troops destined to face an enemy in the field of battle, he thought their previous habits, unsuitable avocations, and scanty means of receiving instruction, would totally forbid them from attaining. The history of the glorious struggle which has since been maintained in Spain will furnish a strong confirmation of the accuracy of this distinction ; for it will be recollected that the hasty levies of the patriots have been almost uniformly repulsed and scattered, when they have ventured directly to oppose the enemy in the field ; while, on the other hand, their activity as irregular troops has principally enabled them to protract for four years a contest against armies formidable in numbers as well as in discipline and experience. There were other objections which Mr. Windham conceived against the volunteers, constituted as Government allowed them to be. The expence which he considered to be unnecessarily incurred in dress and in pay, as well as under many other heads, he did not fail to protest against ; and his complaints were still heavier with respect to the distribution of rank, which was lavishly bestowed

amongst the officers of the volunteer establishment, and which he conceived must prove not only offensive to the regular officers, but, in case of actual service, even dangerous to the country. The exemptions too, which were granted to volunteers, he regarded as highly mischievous, from their tendency to lock up men from better descriptions of service. None of these objections, however, applied to the volunteers themselves; but were directed merely against their constitution, for which they were not to be blamed. It may be safely affirmed that he was entirely friendly to the volunteers as men, and disposed to turn their services to the best account of which he conceived them capable.

It was not in the House of Commons alone that he recommended activity and vigour. He gave his full attention, during the autumn of this year (1803), to the defence of the county of Norfolk, where (besides raising a company of volunteers at Felbrigg, of which he was first the captain, and afterwards the colonel, on its being joined by Government in a battalion with other corps), he personally surveyed a great part of the coast, attended the meetings of Deputy-Lieutenants, and strongly urged the necessity of some local measures of defence, which, however, were not adopted. At one of these meetings, he proposed a set of resolutions containing some accurate and detailed information relative to the state of the Norfolk coast; these resolutions were not passed, but the author of this sketch has in his possession a copy of them,

which, for obvious reasons, it would be improper to publish*.

He returned to his parliamentary duty in November 1803, at the opening of the session, in the course of which a change took place in the state of parties for which the publick seemed scarcely prepared. In order the better to understand the causes which led to this change, it will be necessary to look back to the period which immediately followed the dissolution of Mr. Pitt's cabinet in 1801. — The members of that cabinet who resigned their seats will be observed almost immediately to have discovered differences of opinion amongst themselves, and the Peace of Amiens served to complete their disunion. Mr. Pitt and many of his friends approved of the Peace, or at least of the principles on which it was formed; and gave their general, though not unqualified, support to Mr. Addington's administration; while, on the other hand, Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Windham warmly opposed the ministers on the subject of the Peace as well as occasionally on other measures. From this opposition had sprung a party at first more formidable in talents than in numbers, consisting of the three ex-ministers last named, of the immediate connexions of the Grenville family, and of the surviving personal friends of Mr. Burke; — the latter class including the highly respectable names of Lords Fitzwilliam and Minto, Mr. William Elliot, and Dr. Lawrence. From

* Mr. Windham took occasion to refer to these resolutions in his first speech in the ensuing session, on the 23d Nov. 1803.

this small hostile band, the ministers appeared for a time to receive but little annoyance, backed as they generally were by the powerful aid of Mr. Pitt and his friends; and having also, by a course of conciliatory measures, drawn over to their support some of the partizans of Mr. Fox. Among the latter, Mr. Sheridan became the open defender of the ministers, while Mr. Tierney gave them the full weight of his talents, by accepting an office at their hands. The opposition, too, of Mr. Fox and his remaining friends became only occasional, and was by no means conducted with the warmth which had characterised it in the time of Mr. Pitt's administration. The Peace of Amiens, as has been already seen, had even met with Mr. Fox's approbation. But on the renewal of the war, an opinion of the insufficiency of the ministers to conduct it seemed at once to prevail amongst all the other parties of the house; and all of them, though at first without any actual concert or arrangement, fell into an undisciplined yet effective opposition. The great questions on which they had so long differed were now at rest; — the French revolution had totally changed its course; — the war of 1793 was at an end; — the Peace of Amiens could not be recalled or amended. But a new question had arisen of vital importance to the country, namely, the conduct of the new war; and on this point, if the parties in opposition did not fully agree amongst themselves, they at least much more widely differed from the ministers than they did from each other. The party of which Lord Grenville was considered as the leader in one house and

Mr. Windham in the other, had in the meantime received a considerable increase of strength, both with respect to actual numbers, and to the confidence which, owing to the fulfillment of their predictions, the country had now begun to repose in them. It was in this state of things that the writer of this preface received from Mr. Windham a letter, from which the following is an extract :—

“ *Pall Mall, January 1, 1804.*

“ UPON the subject of coalitions, on which so much appears now, in the way of discussion, and on which you say there is so much anxiety in various quarters, I will write more another time ; unless indeed, as I expect, I shall have an opportunity soon of talking with you, having settled at present, in consequence of these increasing reports of immediate invasion, to come in the course of the week into Norfolk. Writing or speaking, however, I can tell you nothing in respect to fact, as I know no more of any form of coalition, actually begun or projected, than is known to all the world. All that I can do is, to point out the odd inconsistency of persons, who, while they are declaiming continually against party, and exhorting people to forget their former differences, and to unite for the general interest, are ready to fall with all possible violence upon those who take the first step in obedience to that call. This inconsistency indeed is so obvious that it hardly seems to require being pointed out. Do they mean only to say, that you ought to unite with those with whom you are already united ?

This would seem to be an exhortation not very necessary. And if you are to go beyond that, is the union to be with those with whom, disagreeing formerly, you now agree, or are you to take for your associates those with whom you agreed formerly, but now disagree? The nature of the thing seems to admit no other choice."

In a few days after the date of this letter, the author of this narrative received another from him, containing more detailed observations on the same subject:—

" *Pall Mall, January 5, 1804.*

" WITH respect to coalitions, I am sorry that opinions take the turn which you describe; for though nothing has been either said or done on that subject, that I know of, between any of the parties, such is evidently the point to which they seem in a certain degree to tend, and to which it is most devoutly to be wished that they should tend. What upon earth is it that people would have, or are wishing for? Is it desirable that such a man as Mr. Fox, powerful as he will be, in spite of all that can be done to prevent it, should for ever adhere to a system of politicks in which those who are supposed to mean the good of the country cannot join him? If he does not adhere to such a system, that is, if he has either been taught by experience that his system is wrong, or rather, putting all change on his part out of the question (which is the truer way), if on the questions of the present moment, he thinks as one would wish him,

is one not to co-operate with him, is one not to concert, to communicate with him, for giving effect to the opinions thus held in common? Upon what principle of common sense, or of common honesty, is this to be refused? Or how is the state ever to be served, or publick business ever to be carried on, if this is not the case? Men who have once differed upon any great question, must continue to differ for ever; till, in the course of not many years, no two men of any consideration will be found whom it will be possible to put together; and then that will happen which does happen, that a party will be formed out of all the underlings of all parties, whose oppositions have been just as great, and whose coalitions therefore must be just as monstrous, according to the phrase used, but of whom nobody complains, because neither their junctions nor oppositions have been matters that people have much troubled themselves about. But the way in which I wish people to satisfy themselves upon this subject is, by endeavouring to state their objections. They will find, I think, a confirmation of the opinion which they wish to confute, in the impossibility which they will be under of shewing it to be wrong. At least, it is fair to ask that the accusation should be distinctly stated, before an attempt is made at defence. If Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, myself, &c. should agree upon any question or measure, what is there immoral or wrong in our communicating, and concerting together, upon the best means of carrying it into effect? I might add, though it is not necessary, what is there that should make such an

agreement, upon many points, either impossible or very unlikely? The agreement I am speaking of;—the concert in consequence may from a thousand causes be sufficiently unlikely, and those causes, perhaps, far less creditable to the parties than their union would be.”

As the session proceeded, the three parties which had thus accidentally fallen into the same ranks, found opportunities of cementing their strength, and of carrying on conjoint operations, very formidable in their nature to those whom they assailed. A motion made by Mr. Pitt, on the 15th of March 1804, for an enquiry into the state of the navy, had the effect of uniting in its support his own friends with those of the Grenvilles, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Fox;—and though it was negatived by a majority of 71, an opinion began rather generally to prevail that Mr. Addington's administration was not long-lived. In its stead, the country seemed to expect that a ministry would be formed on a broad basis, uniting all the parties then in opposition, and having in its cabinet the two great rival leaders who had for twenty years divided the suffrages of the nation. From such an union, strengthened by such powerful auxiliaries as Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Windham, the highest advantages were confidently looked for. In a letter which I received from Mr. Windham, dated the 29th of March, after adverting to recent divisions in the house, and to the opinions which were entertained of a change of ministers, he added the following passage: “What the ministry may be that will

come in the place of the present one, it is difficult to say. I shall clearly not be a friend to any that does not fairly try to be a comprehensive one." It appears, therefore, that the decision upon which he afterwards acted, had thus early been resolved upon.

On the 11th of April, upon the third reading of the Irish Militia Bill, another trial of strength took place, in which the numbers of the allied oppositionists approached very near to those of the ministers; being 107 against 128. An allusion to this division, and to its probable consequences, is contained in a letter addressed to this writer by Mr. Windham, from which is taken the following short extract:—

“ *Pall Mall, April 19, 1804.*

“ THE late division has, I suppose, set the politicians of Norfolk speculating, as well as the politicians here. The opinions of the learned seems to be (I am not one of the learned) that the fate of the ministry is pretty much decided; not of course by the mere effect of that division, but by the causes that led to it. I suppose the fact may be, that, bating the respite which they get by the present state of the King's health, they can hardly hope to stand long. Then will come the question of what is to succeed them; and to this, I am far from professing to be able to give an answer. I think I have a guess, and that guess is not favourable to any arrangement of which I am likely to make part.”

The ministers, however, fell only by repeated attacks. On the 23d of April, Mr. Fox moved for a committee to consider of measures for the defence of the country. This motion received the support of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Windham, and of their respective friends, amounting in all to 204 against 256. A division, two days afterwards, on the Irish Militia Bill, proved still less favourable to the ministers, who could count only 240 votes against 203.

By these latter divisions, the fate of Mr. Addington's administration was decided. Mr. Pitt, in submitting a list of names to the royal consideration, not only included that of Mr. Fox, but is said to have earnestly and warmly recommended his admission into the new cabinet. But the attempt proved unsuccessful, and Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Windham declined in consequence, to take their seats in a cabinet which was not to be formed on the extensive plan of including the heads of all the parties who had been acting together in opposition. Mr. Pitt, however, accepted the premiership, taking with him Lord Melville, and others of his immediate political friends, to whom were joined Lord Hawkesbury, Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Portland, Lord Eldon, and some other members of the preceding cabinet.

Mr. Windham was now once more the ally of Mr. Fox, and the adversary of Mr. Pitt; — a situation which unjustly exposed him to a charge of inconsistency. Though little inclined to admit that any deliberate act of Mr. Windham's life could require apology, the writer of this narrative may, perhaps, be

allowed to offer some considerations which here naturally suggest themselves, and which, if they are too obvious wholly to have escaped notice, have not before been presented collectively.

Mr. Fox, it will be remembered, besides having been his personal friend and school-fellow, was, from the commencement of his public life to an advanced period of it, his political leader. Mr. Fox, too, was one, who, whatever failings might be imputed to him, had always been described by his sharpest adversaries as "a man made to be loved *;" and who, whatever might be thought of his opinions, certainly could never be charged with having dissembled them. With him, Mr. Windham had deplored the war with our colonies; — with him he had arraigned the principles which placed and maintained Mr. Pitt in office; — and with him, in short, he had generally concurred up to the period of the French Revolution. Out of that event, questions had arisen of such paramount importance, that men who could not view them in the same light, could no longer hold political communion. They were questions at once so novel, that those who before agreed upon every thing might easily differ upon them, and, yet so pervading, that those who unhappily differed upon them, could no longer agree upon any thing. Hence, as has been shewn in the course of this narrative, arose the separation of Mr. Windham from Mr. Fox. But there was nothing necessarily eternal in that separation; — nothing that should pro-

* Mr. Burke.

long it beyond the existence of the events which had caused it. On the other hand, his connection with Mr. Pitt sprang from necessity, not from choice. To that eminent statesman he had for many years politically opposed himself; but in the new circumstances of the times, he thought, or rather yielded to the judgment of others who thought, that to enrol himself as a member of Mr. Pitt's cabinet was the only way to render his services useful to the country. This again was not an act to be for ever binding. The French Revolution had caused it; — the anti-revolutionary war had prolonged it; — and with the expiration of that war, it seemed naturally to terminate. Fully as Mr. Windham approved, and to the latest period of his life continued to approve, the war itself, as well as the general tendency of the measures which Mr. Pitt pursued for checking the progress of revolutionary principles, yet the Peace of Amiens served to shew that on many points relating to the object and conduct of the war, their views had been totally different.

At the commencement of the present war, the questions, which for ten years divided the country, had ceased to exist. The French Revolution, in the progress of time, had totally changed its shape. The republic, pretending to have liberty and equality for its basis, was transformed into a military despotism, which acknowledged no law but the sword. France no longer sought to seduce other nations by offers of fraternization: conquest, not alliance, was now her ambition; and to gratify it, fire and sword were to be

carried into every capital of Europe. In this country, there was no time to waste in canvassing former questions, or fighting over past battles. It was too late to enquire how, and at what stage of it, the danger might have been averted;—it had already reached the door, and must be manfully met. On this most pressing of all subjects—the means of defending ourselves—Mr. Windham and Mr. Fox certainly thought precisely alike, while Mr. Pitt differed from them in some important particulars. They were all of them ready indeed, in this hour of alarm, to try the effect of their consolidated efforts; but the union of two of them being unhappily frustrated, Mr. Windham was left to choose his course. Was he to join Mr. Pitt with whom he differed, or Mr. Fox with whom he agreed? Had both Mr. Fox and himself become members of the new cabinet, their opinions on the question of defence might have been adopted; but without Mr. Fox's co-operation, Mr. Windham could hardly have hoped that his advice would prevail, against numbers, and the weight of Mr. Pitt's authority. He had not, indeed, so much at heart the adoption of any favourite measure, as the prevention of plans and systems which he foresaw would impoverish our means of resistance, and which he might better oppose openly in parliament, than he could have done almost singly in the cabinet. This consideration alone might furnish a sufficient motive for the decision he adhered to, but there were other points of agreement between Mr. Fox and himself, which must have had their influence; particularly the opinion they entertained in common,

concerning the relief sought for by the Catholics of Ireland. In such a situation, to use Mr. Windham's words before quoted, "Is the union to be with those with whom, disagreeing formerly, you now agree? Or with those with whom you agreed formerly, but now disagree?" It was in fact a question, not of men, but of measures, as the former one had been in 1794. Those who, looking at either of those periods, can consider the questions to have been merely of Fox against Pitt, or of Whig against Tory, would seem to have no very enlarged notion of the difficulties and dangers which surrounded the country.

But still, it will be said, there were other points, of no light consideration, upon which the agreement of Mr. Fox and Mr. Windham would have been inconsistent and unnatural. This is perfectly true; but they were questions which did not then press for decision; and whenever they might be brought forward, no such agreement upon them was necessary. It should always be recollected, that, though Mr. Windham usually acted with a party, because he thought that his public services were thus rendered more effective, yet he was never what is commonly called a "thorough party-man;" — he never scrupled to leave those with whom he generally sided, when his judgment was at issue with theirs. On the question, for instance, of a Reform of Parliament, it will be remembered that he opposed Mr. Fox at a time when he was considered as a member of that statesman's party. There was nothing in their re-union that should prevent such a difference from recurring, whenever the

occasion might again arise ; and, in fact, their subsequent course proved that neither of them considered himself to have formed a compact of so monstrous a nature, as to preclude the free exercise of his judgment on any subject that might be presented to him.

It may be further observed, that whatever praise or blame might attach to the act, Mr. Windham was only entitled to share it with many others. Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Spencer, and all those distinguished persons who, in company with Mr. Burke, had seceded from the Foxites in 1793 (the Duke of Portland alone excepted), were, in every respect as responsible for this new coalition as Mr. Windham himself was. And not these alone ; — for Lord Grenville — the near relative of Mr. Pitt — who for almost twenty years had supported and shared in his administration — who had in consequence been uniformly opposed to Mr. Fox — and who had no knowledge of him but as an adversary ; — even Lord Grenville considered the circumstances of the times to be such as to require him to relinquish old connexions, and to form new ones, with the sacrifice of power, of office, and still more, of the confidence perhaps of many, if not most of those with whom he had so long acted. In fact, a new order of things had arisen, and men were no longer to be spell-bound by former alliances, but were called upon to pursue that course alone which, in the circumstances of the moment, seemed best calculated to avert the impending danger.

But if the question were to be decided by authority — if a name alone were wanted to sanction the act —

it would be sufficient to observe to those who are most forward in blaming Mr. Windham, that the coalition they condemn was one in which Mr. Pitt himself was ready to join him. Without feeling the ties of former friendship, without even concurring with him on the questions of the day, Mr. Pitt had joined in opposition, and was ready to meet in office his great political rival, who for twenty years had been the soul of a party that had arraigned him and all his measures! No blame is imputed to Mr. Pitt for this seeming inconsistency. On the contrary, it is justly regarded as a splendid instance of magnanimity; and it is only to be regretted that circumstances prevented these two illustrious men from holding out to minor politicians an example highly worthy of their imitation. But this inference at least may be safely drawn—that, on comparing the motives to such an union with Mr. Fox, if Mr. Pitt could be justified for assenting to it, Mr. Windham would have been deeply culpable in rejecting it.

The reader, it is hoped, will pardon this long pause in the narrative. The writer will be satisfied if the worst that shall be said of it, be, that it was unnecessary.

In June 1804, soon after the change of administration, Mr. Pitt brought forward his Additional Force Bill, more generally known afterwards by the name of the “Parish Bill,” the recruiting under its provisions being intended to be effected by parish officers. Mr. Windham opposed it in two able speeches, reports of which will be found in the ensuing collection. The bill, however, passed both houses.

In the course of the ensuing session, (21st of February 1805,) he called the attention of the house in a long and luminous speech, to the state of the defence of the country; but on this question the minister was again triumphant. He also took occasion, on the 14th of May following, to pronounce his opinion in favour of the claims of the Catholics of Ireland. This was a topic which he had much at heart. In a letter to his friend, Sir John Cox Hippesley, which has been preserved by that gentleman in a late valuable publication, he has expressed his sentiments on this subject with so much force and perspicuity, that, extensively as it has already been circulated, the reader probably will not be sorry to find it transplanted into the present work. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that the author avails himself of Sir John Hippesley's obliging permission for republishing the letter alluded to, in the Appendix to this narrative *. The value of Mr. Windham's authority on this question has been highly appreciated by the present truly amiable and enlightened Bishop of Norwich, who, in his speech in the House of Lords, on the 18th of June 1811, in favour of the Catholic claims, after observing that the question is not to be considered as a point of theology, which is to be settled by divines or by theorists in their studies, but as a great question of state, to be determined by enlightened practical statesmen, adds that "the judgment of four such men as Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Windham, carries far

* See Appendix (D).

more weight with it upon a question like this, than the judgment of both the universities, and indeed all the divines that ever sat in convocation under the dome of St. Paul's, or in the Jerusalem chamber, from the reformation to the present hour."

The remainder of the session of 1805 was chiefly occupied by the proceedings against Lord Melville, in which Mr. Windham took but little part. He concurred indeed in the several votes for enquiry, but declined taking a personal share in it, considering himself disqualified for such a duty by "the official connexion which he had had with Lord Melville, the social intercourse thence arising, and the impression made on his mind by the many amiable and estimable qualities which the Noble Lord was known to possess."

Towards the close of the session, he took occasion to call the attention of Government to the case of the gallant Captain Wright, of the royal navy, the friend of Sir Sydney Smith. This meritorious officer was unjustly suffering a severe imprisonment at Paris, contrary to the rules of war, as observed amongst civilized nations. Some months after this appeal in his favour, he was deprived of his miserable existence. The manner of his death was never correctly ascertained; but from the testimony of a gentleman who was a prisoner with him in the Temple, it appears that he had more than once declared, that, whatever calamities he might be doomed to suffer, he would never so far forget his firmness as a man, and his duty as a christian, as to seek relief in an act of suicide. He

therefore formally cautioned his friends not to credit the reports which he foretold would be given out by the Government of France, in the event of his death. It is certain that he was living a fortnight after his decease had been announced in the newspapers. His existence latterly was only known to his fellow-prisoners by his playing on a flute, which had long been the amusement of his solitary hours.

The expectation of a vacant seat for the University of Oxford, occasioned, in the summer of 1805, an active canvas for Mr. Windham, on the part of his friends, who were naturally desirous that one of the most honourable distinctions which the University could bestow, should be conferred on so celebrated a member of it. The prospect of such a seat was, on every account, highly desirable to Mr. Windham, but the vacancy did not then take place; and when it afterwards occurred, he had engaged himself in a contest for Norfolk. It was about this time that a report was circulated in Norfolk, that, in a letter to Mr. Coke, his early and much-valued friend, with whom he was once more on terms of political agreement, he had renounced some of the opinions which had been entertained by him during the period of his acting with Mr. Pitt. This rumour was mentioned to Mr. Windham by the writer of this narrative, who, in reply, received a letter which may deserve publication, on account of the clear and decisive manner in which the opinions in question are recognized and asserted : —

“ *Pall Mall, October 7, 1805.*

“ I HAVE requested Mr. Lukin, who leaves town for Norwich to night (and was very near having his offer accepted, of staying till to-morrow and taking me with him) to set you and my friends right on the subject of the reports which you mention, by an assurance that there is not a word of truth in them. It is neither true that any thing to the effect stated was said by me to Mr. Coke, nor that any such alteration of opinions on my part has ever taken place. What are these opinions which they suppose me to have changed? That the French revolution was not a system of liberty, nor much conducive to the happiness of mankind? I should have thought that all the world was now pretty much of that way of thinking. That if not opposed and destroyed, it threatened to over-run the earth? All that we are now suffering, and fearing to suffer, may be pretty good evidence that this opinion was not very erroneous. Is it that I was wrong in thinking that peace would not save us, and in condemning, in consequence, the favourite and dear Peace of Amiens? Whatever may be thought of the renewal of the war, which I perhaps did not think the most judiciously managed, yet nobody surely will say, that our condition was likely to be very good, or the progress of French dominion soon to have stopped, had that peace continued. The same may be remarked of the former war. Who shall pretend to say, that the progress of the French Revolution would have been less rapid, or less dangerous, had Great Britain

never joined in opposing it, or had no opposition been made to it at all? Such an opinion certainly derives no countenance from the facts, which prove incontestably that the French Revolution did not need to be provoked to become mischievous; that the aggressions were not the consequence of the resistance, but the resistance of the aggressions. If the *conduct* of the former war is that which I am supposed now to condemn, the fact may be perfectly true, but it is no proof of change of opinion; as I cannot condemn it now more than I did during the whole time it was carrying on, or than it was at all times condemned by Mr. Burke. It would be very odd if I were to take to changing my opinions now, when those who formerly opposed them, might be supposed to be most convinced of their truth.

“ With respect to the letter alluded to, it was written to Mr. Coke, in consequence of hearing of the uncommonly kind exertions which he was making to serve me in my views on Oxford, and was answered by him in a letter of equal kindness. It is very possible that I might have said (for I have no recollection of the particulars) that I lamented the differences which had separated me from those for whom I had so much personal regard, or something to that effect; which some blundering friend (for I am sure Mr. Coke never conceived such an idea) may have construed into a renunciation of my former opinions. But even this must have happened amongst reporters at second hand; for no one, however confused or inaccurate, could have made such a mistake, if he had read the letter.

At least, it is very odd if I should have written in a way to convey an opinion, so little in my thoughts at the time, and so totally contrary to the fact.

“ Yours, with great truth,

“ W. WINDHAM.*”

Another letter, which I received from him in the course of the same month, refers to the explanation given by the preceding one : —

“ *October 24, 1805.*

“ MR. LUKIN, if you saw him, will have told you how very near I was accompanying him and the Dean of Wells to the sessions, and I may further add, that even after they were gone, so intent was I on making a visit to Norfolk, that I did not give up the intention, but would, if possible, have followed them. I was prevented by a very disagreeable, but very urgent and insurmountable reason.

“ The letter which I sent you at that time, however hastily written (and perhaps not the less so on that account) will have satisfied you that I have not left my friends in the lurch, by renouncing opinions which I had long maintained with them. I have no wish

* Unnecessary as it may seem to say any thing further on so absurd a report as that which occasioned the above letter, the Editor cannot help adding, that he has been favoured with Mr. Coke's authority for stating that no renunciation of former opinions, either written or verbal, was ever made to him by Mr. Windham.

did talk, and which was alone conformable to the sentiments existing in my mind. In none of the papers, as I am told, am I made to express myself in terms so strong as those which I actually used. The history is, that having been forced, by the occupation of our bench by Mr. Bankes, to sit more under the gallery than is desirable, and having spoken moreover in a lower tone than usual, owing perhaps to a little emotion, the reporters in the gallery could only hear what I said very imperfectly, and supplied what was wanting very much according to their own fancy. You may be fully assured that what I said was of a sort perfectly to satisfy every friend of Mr. Pitt; and this I am very anxious should be understood; as nothing could have been so base and ungenerous, and so perfectly adverse to the purpose of my speaking at all, as the saying any thing ungracious of him in the circumstances in which he was supposed to be, and unhappily was. I am sorry to say that all hope of recovery is entirely out of the question, if he should be alive even at this instant. As I expressed myself yesterday, the extinction of such great talents and powers is a very awful and affecting event, even in the minds of those whose lot it may have been to be most constantly opposed to them."

On Mr. Pitt's death, a change of administration was naturally looked for. The views which, in Mr. Windham's mind, rendered such a measure desirable, will appear from a letter which he addressed to me the day after the date of the preceding one : —

" Pall Mall, January 23, 1806.

" NOTHING is yet known, or was not half an hour ago, of the course that things are likely to take with respect to the formation of a ministry. I should be much less solicitous on the point than I am, if on this another point did not depend; namely, the having an army. An army is, at this moment, the first concern of the country; not necessary merely for the purpose of war, but equally so for the purpose of peace. That is the best ministry which will best succeed in putting the country in a good state of defence; and if I did not conceive that our ideas upon that subject were better than those likely otherwise to be adopted, and that our measures, whatever they may be, would be better respecting Ireland, I should be quite as well satisfied to remain in our present situation as to change it."

The change which was expected took place in the beginning of the ensuing month, Lord Grenville being commanded by His Majesty to form a new administration. He was himself placed at the head of the treasury, as prime minister. Earl Spencer, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Windham, received respectively the seals of the home, the foreign, and the war and colonial departments*. Earl Fitzwilliam presided at the council,

* Sir George Shee was appointed Mr. Windham's under-secretary of state, acting for the colonial department. The superintendence of the war department was undertaken for several months

Lord Howick (now Earl Grey) at the admiralty; Lord Henry Petty became chancellor of the exchequer; and the remaining seats in the cabinet were filled by Lords Erskine, Sidmouth, Moira, and Ellenborough.

The earliest and chief object of Mr. Windham's attention, on his attaining office, was to arrange and bring forward measures for increasing the military means of the country. The number of plans which were suggested for his consideration, by writers from all quarters and of all descriptions, would scarcely be credited by the reader. Though I believe he did not borrow an idea from any of them, he did not hastily reject them, but gave them generally a fair and patient hearing. His measures having been finally settled in the cabinet, he stated the purport of them to the House of Commons, on the 3d of April 1806, in a speech which Mr. Fox pronounced to be one of the most eloquent ever delivered in parliament, and which, though it occupied very near four hours in the delivery, seemed not to be thought too long by any of his auditors *. The nature and object of these measures are so fully explained in the speech itself, that it would be superfluous to detail them here at any length. It may be sufficient to observe, that to better the con-

by the late lamented General Robert Craufurd, without emolument. On his departure for South America, Sir James Cockburn was appointed war under-secretary. The Author of this sketch was most kindly invited by Mr. Windham to become his private secretary, which appointment he held during the time that his patron remained in office.

* See Vol. II. page 332.

dition of the soldier was his great and leading principle for increasing the regular force of the country. To hold out periods for the termination of the soldier's services, and to recompense those services by additional rewards, were the means by which he sought to accomplish this improvement ; — and the immediate effect which he expected to produce, was, the rendering of the army more inviting as a profession, from its being more advantageous in a prudential view, and consequently more respectable, on account of the better description of persons who might thus be induced to engage in it. The soldier, in short, was to serve an apprenticeship to arms, as to a trade, and then either to follow it up, or to relinquish it, at his option ; but was to be entitled to additional benefits, if he should be disposed to continue his services. These were the main objects of his measures, which included, however, many subordinate regulations. The Additional Force Act was to be repealed, in order to remove the impediments which its high bounties opposed to the ordinary recruiting service. By withholding some allowances from the volunteers, he proposed to save a considerable expence to the country, without rendering that establishment less efficient. And lastly, by a general Training Act he expected to employ a great proportion of the population of the country in a manner which he conceived to be more advantageous, as well as much less expensive, than that in which most of the volunteers were employed under the subsisting regulations.

These measures, under the form of various bills, passed through both Houses of Parliament, with considerable majorities. It should not be forgotten that a liberal and *immediate* addition to the pensions of non-commissioned officers and privates, in certain cases, was carefully provided for. Nor was it towards these alone that he directed the bounty of Government to flow. The pay of officers of infantry and militia subalterns, and the pensions of officers' widows received an increase from his hands, though not to the amount to which he was desirous of carrying it, had the resources of the country been thought capable of bearing such an additional burthen of expenditure.

In the summer of 1806, Mr. Fox, whose health had been declining from the time of his accepting office, found a grave near that of his illustrious rival. His loss was deeply lamented by Mr. Windham, whose personal regard for him had perhaps never wholly ceased, but had certainly been fully restored upon their recent political reconciliation. This event, besides the regret which it produced, happened to be the occasion of some embarrassment to him. In consequence of an arrangement which was proposed in the cabinet respecting the appointment to certain offices (but not affecting his own, which was to remain as before), the acceptance of a peerage was very strongly pressed upon him by his colleagues, and very resolutely refused by him. Convenient as the measure might have been to him, with a view to avoid the expence of future elections, (particularly of a contest in Norfolk, where a canvass had actually been begun

male and female, escaped from their dangerous posts as well as they were able, but certainly not shot-free. So well was the imitation executed, that the real footman, like the real Sosia in the play, is said to have received a severe beating from the populace, who mistook him for his counterfeit. The consequences of the joke, however, did not end here; for Mr. Windham and Mr. Coke, innocent of it as they really were, became victims to it. A young gentleman of landed property, the son of one of the ladies who had thus been subjected to mockery, undertook, with feelings which it would be difficult not to excuse, to revenge the insult which had been offered to his mother and her friend; — and with this view, he addressed to the House of Commons, in the names of himself and some of his tenants, a petition against the return of Mr. Coke and Mr. Windham. This petition was grounded chiefly upon alledged offences against the Treating Acts; — there was also indeed a charge of undue influence, which, however, was hardly attempted to be proved. It was certainly true, and was abundantly proved before the Committee, who tried the merits of the case, that a very great expence had been incurred by all parties, and that voters had been entertained, contrary to the letter of the acts, as well on the side of the successful candidates, as on that of Mr. Wodehouse, who of course took no part in the petition. The Committee accordingly declared the election to be void, and Mr. Windham and Mr. Coke became ineligible for Norfolk upon that vacancy. Their friends, however, returned at the new election,

without opposition, Sir Jacob Astley, their former representative, and Mr. Edward Coke, the brother of Mr. Windham's colleague. Mr. Windham having been previously returned not only for Norfolk, but for the borough of New Romney, now took his seat for the latter place; and Mr. Coke was unanimously chosen for Derby, upon his brother's vacancy. The pecuniary burthen on this occasion, which was by no means inconsiderable, did not fall with proportionate weight on Mr. Windham, who had originally been invited by Mr. Coke and his friends to join in the contest, upon the terms of being responsible for a stipulated sum. To the honour of both, it should be related, that when the expences were found to exceed their calculated amount, Mr. Windham pressed and Mr. Coke refused a further contribution in aid of them.

Some apology may be due to the reader for thus detailing anecdotes of merely local importance, but their connection with Mr. Windham's life seemed to require that they should not be passed over without notice*.

* The reader, especially if he should happen to be a Norfolk man, will pardon me, while I am on election topics, for noticing an accomplishment of a seemingly ludicrous nature, which was much admired in Mr. Windham. The custom of chairing a member at the Norfolk and Norwich elections is not confined merely to *carrying* him in a chair, as at most other places, but he has the additional pleasure (if he thinks it so) of being *tossed up*, as it is there called; — that is, upon a halt made at every thirty or forty yards of his progress, he is thrown up in his chair (which is supported by poles) completely out of the hands of his chairmen, and

Previous to the meeting of Parliament, an expedition for South America, the plan of which had been arranged by Mr. Windham, embarked under the command of Brigadier-General Robert Craufurd. The object of it was, to establish, by conciliatory means if possible, a permanent footing on the western coast of that continent, so as to enable us to turn to greater advantage the possession we had recently obtained of the important post of Buenos Ayres. The troops, consisting of about 5,000 men, proceeded on their voyage with uncommonly favourable prospects, the greatest attention to their health and comfort having been successfully betowed on them by their commanding officer. But the unexpected loss of Buenos Ayres diverted the armament from its course; for, by subsequent orders, General Craufurd was directed to join the troops sent out under the command of General Whitelocke, which were destined to attempt the recovery of our lost ground; an attempt, which contrary to all calculation that could be previously made, proved unsuccessful. From General Craufurd's extensive professional information, Mr. Windham had derived great aid in carrying into execution the measures

caught again, three times successively at each haking. This is a custom which a timid or unpractised person generally thinks "more honoured in the breach than the observance," but Mr. Windham was remarkable for going through this ceremony with such perfect ease and agility, that the exhibition was rendered really graceful and elegant. He was of course the *favourite* of the chairmen, who were not a little proud of the opportunities he afforded them of exhibiting their skill.

for benefiting the army*. On his departure Mr. Windham called in the assistance of his friend Sir James Cockburn, to whom he always professed himself much indebted for forwarding objects over which he continued to take a watchful interest.

Soon after the meeting of the new parliament, Mr. Windham found a welcome opportunity of giving full expression to those chivalrous feelings with

* In this accomplished officer the nation has recently sustained a heavy loss. It may be needless to relate, what must long be in the recollection of every Englishman, that Major-General ROBERT CRAUFURD received a mortal wound, while leading on the light division, at the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo; and that, by Lord Wellington's directions, he was buried in the breach which he had so gallantly stormed. Presumptuous as it may seem, to add any thing to the praises which his commanding officer and his country have bestowed on his memory, the Author of this narrative is unwillingly to omit an opportunity of bearing his personal testimony to the many excellent qualities of this valuable man. He was enthusiastically attached to his profession, to which his life was literally devoted. He had fathomed the depths of military science, and during many years experience in distant parts of the globe, he had ably applied in practice the principles which he had gleaned from study. In fact, few men of his years had seen so much of actual service, and none was more deeply versed in every branch of that profession to the summit of which he would undoubtedly have risen, had his life been spared. As a writer he was remarkably perspicuous and intelligent; and during the short period of his holding a seat in parliament, he was a frequent and powerful speaker on military subjects. He particularly distinguished himself on one occasion by the clear, able, and comprehensive manner in which he treated of the defence of the country. His glorious but premature death took place on the 24th of January 1812, in the forty-eighth year of his age.

which the successful exertions of British valour never failed to inspire him. In his official capacity, he had to call the attention of the House of Commons to the victory which had been gallantly achieved on the Plains of Maida, by a small body of troops under the command of Sir John Stuart. As the task was grateful to him, he executed it in a manner which made the most lively impression on his auditors. The event of the Battle of Maida, so glorious in itself, he pronounced to be a sure earnest of future triumphs; and his predictions have been happily verified. The rapid and splendid succession of our victories in Spain and Portugal has now incontestably established the position which Mr. Windham always maintained, that "British disciplined troops possess a decided superiority over those of the enemy*."

It was during Mr. Windham's absence in Norfolk, that Lord Howick called the attention of the House of Commons to a clause which was intended by the ministers to be introduced into the Mutiny Bill, for enabling Roman Catholics to hold a certain military rank, and permitting to all persons in the army professing that religion the uncontrouled exercise of it. It was afterwards thought expedient that the intended provisions should be made the subject of a separate bill, and be extended to the navy. The misunderstanding which this measure occasioned between His Majesty and his ministers, and the consequent dis-

* A report of this animated speech will be found at the commencement of the third volume.

missal of the latter from their posts, are subjects that need not be minutely treated of. It will be sufficient to relate, that on the 25th of March 1807, when called upon with the other ministers to deliver up his appointments, Mr. Windham received a flattering assurance of the sense which His Majesty graciously entertained of the motives that had guided him in executing the duties of his office.

In the very short period of a year and six weeks, Mr. Windham had done much for the benefit of the army. He had abolished service for life, and substituted service for periods; — he had increased the pay of the subaltern, as well as the ultimate rewards of the private soldier; — and (though circumstances had delayed the execution of it) he had passed a measure for arming and training a great part of the population of the country. Little, indeed, had been done in the way of offensive operations; nor, in the then circumstances of the war, was he at all desirous that his administration should be distinguished by services of that nature. He always professed to dislike a war upon sugar islands. But, had a glorious occasion presented itself, like that which has since arisen in Spain, there can be no doubt that he would have displayed in the conduct of a foreign war, as much ardour and energy as he had shewn in establishing measures for internal defence, and for laying the foundation of an efficient army.

The Duke of Portland was placed at the head of the new administration. Lord Castlereagh, whom Mr. Windham had succeeded in the war and colonial de-

partment, again received the seals of that office; and Lord Hawkesbury, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Perceval occupied the other prominent situations in the new cabinet. In two successive divisions, the ministers succeeded in negating the motions which had been brought forward for censuring the means of their attaining office. Their success, however, was not so decided, as to render the continuance of the parliament adviseable. It was, therefore, dissolved on the 28th April 1807, in its first session, and within five months after it had assembled.

The seat for Norfolk, which Mr. Windham had two months before been deprived of by the decision of a Committee, was occupied, as has been related, by Sir Jacob Astley, who, after much entreaty, had been persuaded to accept it when Mr. Windham became disqualified; and who could not a second time be expected to retire in Mr. Windham's favour. The kindness, however, of Lord Fitzwilliam, always ready to be exerted towards him whenever an occasion called for it, supplied the loss of other opportunities, and Mr. Windham was returned to his sixth parliament as member for the Borough of Higham Ferrers.

In the first debate of the new parliament he made a vigorous stand against the clamour of "no popery," which he complained had been raised against him and his late colleagues*. Soon afterwards he gave his decided opposition to Lord Castlereagh's bill for allowing a proportion of the militia to transfer their

* See Vol. III. p. 21.

services into the line, by enlisting at their option either for periods or for life *. This he considered as a fatal interruption of his measures which parliament had sanctioned in the preceding year. At the conclusion of the session he brought forward, in the shape of propositions, a summary view of the advantages which had already been derived from the system of recruiting for periods †.

The expedition which was sent against Copenhagen, in the summer of 1807, received his decided disapprobation. The following is a letter which he addressed to his nephew Captain Lukin, who was employed in the naval part of that service : —

“ *Pall Mall,*

“ DEAR WILLIAM, *September 5th, 1807.*

“ I HAVE a choice opportunity of writing to you in the return of Mr. Hoppner, from whom I received the latest, and at the same time, the earliest intelligence of you. — Your letter up to the 16th did not reach me till after he had called, and given me an account of you as late as the 23d. I feel very doubtful and very anxious as to the result of your operations, though Hoppner seems to think that the whole will be settled by the time that he returns. If it should, the cause must be, either the want of provisions and water, or that the inhabitants cannot submit to the injury to be done to the town; for the works seem to be such as must, for a considerable time,

* See Vol. III. p. 30.

† See Vol. III. p. 68.

enable a force, however weak, to hold out against a strong one. But success itself will bring with it no satisfaction. I cannot feel that the accomplishment of all we look for is an equivalent, either for the risk that will have been run, or for the certain discredit that we shall have incurred, and ill-will that we shall have excited. Buonaparté's designs upon England will not turn upon his having or not the Danish fleet. Our proceedings in the case of Portugal (though such as I never ceased to regret from the moment almost of my having consented to them) were not within a thousand degrees so exceptionable as these; and they ended accordingly in a way which produced neither reproach nor ill-will. Had the worst happened, our conduct could not well have been charged as having any thing in it unjustifiable or irregular.

“ Let me recollect, upon this occasion, to obviate an impression which you may have received from circumstances which I heard only by a fortunate accident, in respect to a point where I should be sorry to have my opinion mistaken. ——— told me of his having met you at sea, and having shewn you the machine with which he was provided for blowing up ships. I was sorry to find that from his account of the orders under which he acted, you might have been led into the belief that it was by my directions that the machine in question was put on board his vessel. Quite the contrary; — it was in direct opposition to my opinion. I deprecate such a mode of warfare, as bad in itself, and one by which we should have much more to lose than to gain.

" Farewell. You will let us hear from you at your leisure. When the fleet returns, we will endeavour to join you off Cromer, or at Yarmouth.

" Yours affectionately,

" W. WINDHAM."

The latter part of the autumn, and beginning of the winter of 1807, he passed in Norfolk, in quiet retirement. Being now disengaged from the bustle of office, which he often described as "a perpetual contested election," he once more sought leisure to encourage pursuits in which he had always felt more real enjoyment than he had found as a labourer in the ungrateful soil of politics. A short extract of a letter which I received from him during this recess, may serve to shew how little relish he had for those employments which public men are supposed to regard as their earthly Paradise. It should be observed, that a report appears to have reached him, respecting the probability of a change in the administration: —

" *Felbrigg, December 12, 1807.*

" Mr. ———'s news, which ——— has inclosed to me, I can lay but little stress upon; though he may have grounds for believing it, as such things do sometimes transpire in ways that he may have had access to. Perhaps I am the more hard of belief, from having so little anxiety that the thing should be true. This residence at Felbrigg, though I have not, from circumstances, made it so comfortable as it ought to have been, has still increased my indisposition to pub-

lic exertion; and I shrink from the prospect of returning to parliamentary duty, much more to that of office. I am at times inclined to wish that I had accepted an offer, which you know was pressed upon me, and by means of which I might have better indulged the inclination I now feel for retirement, without wholly losing my hold on public life*.

“As to the lead of a party in the House of Commons, it is a situation which I have no reason to think would ever be offered to me, but which infallibly I would never accept. I took an early opportunity of preventing any difficulty upon that subject, by putting myself out of the question.

“You give me a delicate hint in some of your letters, about the task which I was to perform here†. I am sorry to say that I have as yet done nothing, but I hope soon to get into better ways.”

In a subsequent letter to me, his dislike of London and of public business was repeated even in stronger terms: —

“*Felbrigg, January 6, 1808.*

“THE time for returning to town comes now dreadfully near, and finds me, as I am sorry to say is too apt to be the case, very much unprepared for it.

* The offer of a peerage noticed at page 82. of this narrative.

† The task alluded to was the revision of some of his military speeches, with a view to their publication.

“ Unhouselled, unannointed, &c.” I have been sinking fast in idleness, and have been worse, in fact, from not having been quite well ; — not so much unwell indeed, as annoyed by a course of medicine.”

The idleness, however, of which he here complains, is only to be understood as an absence from political employment ; for a mind like his, which, besides being rich in its hoards of science and literature, could lay up stores of wisdom from the commonest events of ordinary life, could never, by any figure of speech, be pronounced idle, unless through the modesty of its owner.

In the session of 1808, he took occasion to express the strongest disapprobation of the motives which had occasioned the Expedition against Copenhagen. He also opposed the Local Militia Act ; and took an active part in rejecting the Bill for providing for the Maintenance of Curates ; which he considered as introducing a dangerous interference with the property of the church *. On a subsequent day, he had an opportunity of resisting what he deemed to be an attack on the accustomed comforts and conveniences of the London public. It had been understood that, for the accommodation of a few individuals, some further encroachments were intended to be made on Hyde Park †, the “ lungs of the metropolis” as it had been emphatically called by the late Lord Chatham. The matter was first noticed in the House of Commons

* See Vol. III. p. 96.

† Vol. III. p. 109.

by Mr. Windham, and on the next day he supported, in a short but characteristic speech, a motion which was made on the subject by Mr. Creevey. The scheme meeting with this opposition, was not proceeded upon *.

Early in the summer of 1808, the eyes of all Europe were directed towards Spain, where a gallant spirit broke forth, such as few persons perhaps besides Mr. Windham had harboured a hope of. His anticipation of it will be found in a speech occasioned by the capture of Monte-Video, and delivered on the 16th of April 1807, more than a twelvemonth before the commencement of the resistance which he contemplated. From the first notice of this resistance to the latest period of his life, he was a zealous *Spaniard*. He not only took the most lively interest in the proceedings of the patriots, but even promised himself an opportunity of becoming a personal witness of them, by undertaking a voyage to the scene of action. With a view to give facility to this purpose, he actually began and made some progress in the study of the Spanish language. It happened, however, that a rheumatic complaint, for which, after other means had failed, he sought relief from the Bath waters, delayed his project, till the retreat of Sir John Moore, and the disasters with which Spain then seemed nearly overwhelmed, rendered the execution of it no longer desirable or expedient. The intended trip is alluded

* See Vol. III. p. 145.

to in a letter which I received from him before his departure for Bath, and in which his description of his disorder may be thought not uninteresting by those who felt a personal regard for him, especially as it has been thought to have had a share in producing the fatal complaint which occasioned his dissolution:—

“ *Pall Mall, October 21, 1848.*

“ I AM still here, and still confined to my house, though likely I hope soon to be released. There is nothing indeed that either now or for some time past should prevent my going out, but the fear of disturbing a course of recovery that seems to be going on well, and of which one of the means might be, the avoiding motion and exposure to cold. I have dislodged the complaint from my back, and have no remains but in the leg and thigh on one side; these, however, though inconsiderable, make me walk worse than before, while the medicines I am taking, and the confinement I am enduring, render me, for the time, less well in general health. The fineness of the day has tempted me for the first time to take a turn upon the leads at the back of the house; but I do not find that I make much hand (I should rather perhaps say much *foot*) in walking, while the air has not done me half so much good as I should have found in Hudson's garden.

“ You will come up with a grand stock of health after these long holidays. I must have recourse to

some expedient of the same sort, as soon as I am at liberty; but whether in Spain, in Norfolk, or elsewhere, I do not as yet know.

“ Yours, with great truth,

“ W. W.”

In another letter to me, of the 30th of October, he describes himself to be recovering, but adds, “ I have still a remnant of rheumatism near my hip, lying like snow under the hedges, and which, like that, may continue to lie a long while after the general frost has broken up.” — He at length sought relief at Bath, where he tried the waters, under the care of Dr. Falconer, who pronounced the complaint to be *Ischias*.

He remained at Bath till the intelligence arrived of the later operations of Sir John Moore's army. It should here be noticed, that, with respect to the assistance which this country was called upon to afford to the Spaniards, his opinion from the first was, that it should be extensive. If any force were to be sent into the interior of Spain, he thought it should be a formidable one, but he doubted whether the operations of large coasting armaments would not prove much more effectual. The sending of a force, in the first instance, to Portugal, he regarded as a measure by no means necessary or desirable, but it having been resorted to, and the expulsion of the French from that country having been effected (though in a manner and upon terms which he considered to be highly unsatisfactory), he then thought that our further exertions should be directed to the coasts of Catalonia and

Biscay; where the armies of the French, though their progress into the Peninsula might not be completely arrested, would at least be so harassed and diminished, that their subsequent operations might be rendered abortive. To use his own words, "it was the neck of the bottle which we ought to stop up." This opinion is referred to in the following extract from a letter which he addressed to me while he was at Bath:—

" Bath, January 2, 1809.

"MOORE'S purpose of advancing I have heard with great pleasure from Lord Liverpool, who is in the adjoining room. I have lately received some very interesting accounts, both from Spain, and from those who have been there; and the result of them is to teach me great distrust of what we may hear unfavourable to the Spaniards. We are a sad people either to judge of, or to communicate with foreigners; and unless our army can strike some great stroke, which they will hardly do without some great risk, their presence will have done more harm than good. The best of the intelligence is the advance of Moore, after he had heard of the success of the French at Madrid. This success at Madrid, with the character which the inhabitants seem to have manifested, may possibly be to Buonaparté the very reverse of an advantage. It is a point too, on which, from pride and passion, he may be supposed to have committed an error.

"The part in which the greatest error seems chargeable upon our counsels is the eastern coast of

Spain. I have seen officers who were with our squadron in that quarter, and witnessed the conduct of the Spaniards at Gerona. Nothing could exceed the ardour which was shewn by the people, nor the means of resistance which the country afforded. It never can have been right, that no assistance was furnished on that side from Sicily, which it might have been worth while even to abandon, for the sake of what might have been done by that army in Catalonia. You were telling me, when I was in London, of what my opinion had been, respecting operations from hence on the northern coast, and which I had almost forgotten; but I found a confirmation of the fact of my having entertained that opinion, in a letter which I had begun, but left unfinished, to Lord Mulgrave."

Another letter, addressed to his nephew Mr. R. Lukin, may be inserted on account of its reference to this still interesting subject: —

" *Bath, January 22, 1809.*

" DEAR ROBERT,

" I THANK you for your letter and for your enquiries. I am capable enough of going to London, and to the house, or any where else, but I am unwilling to carry away with me a complaint, when I am on the only spot where an easy cure may be hoped for. I begin, however, to be a little impatient. The *Clangor Tubarum* in the House of Commons, as heard through the reports of the newspapers, makes me rather restless and agitated, and uneasy at not being

in the battle. I am not prepared to go the length of saying that there has been no case in which troops in the interior might be employed with advantage, though I have always seen great inconvenience likely to attend the measure, and have inclined rather to the course of keeping up a continual alarm upon the coast, and assisting the efforts of the inhabitants by occasional and desultory descents. * * * * *

“ Yours; &c.

“ W. W.”

The retreat of Sir John Moore, with all the respect which he entertained for the memory of that brave and unfortunate man, he never fully approved of; neither the measure itself, nor the mode in which it was conducted; but he gave ample credit to the gallantry which was manifested in the Battle of Corunna. Two other letters which he addressed to me while he was at Bath will serve to shew how deeply he was interested in the passing events of the war : —

“ *Bath, January 23, 1809.*

“ I SHALL look with anxiety for the chance of a letter from you to-morrow, though with little hope that it will bring any mitigation of the dreadful news which we have received here to day, and which to you perhaps is even yet only on its way. Moore killed, Baird with his arm and part of his shoulder carried away, ninety officers killed and wounded, and a loss of men proportionate to a loss of that amount in officers! Such are the particulars which our in-

telligence contains, and which stands upon authority that leaves but little room to hope that the statement may be much exaggerated. The news is not indeed the worst that could have been received, or that might even have been apprehended; but it is fatal under every view in which it can be considered; particularly if it is to have that further disastrous effect which is ascribed to it, of being the last exhibition which we are to make of ourselves in the Peninsula. Though I felt always most strongly the dangers to which we exposed ourselves by sending an army into the interior; and though it would seem at first view, that we have tried that measure in a way the most exceptionable, yet I cannot concur in the censure of it which has been so broadly laid down, and from which I am happy in having some time ago expressed my dissent. * * * *

“ I am, I think, a little better, and am anxious not to be longer absent, though I do not know what it may be in my power to do.”

“ *Bath, January 26, 1809.*

“ I HAVE received your letter to day, and but for the interruption of the post should have had it yesterday. General Hope's letter is felt, I conclude, by everybody to be a very excellent one. I had before been satisfied by the account of officers who had been at Corunna at the time, that the victory was one which Buonaparté could not conceal, and would establish a new proof of the superiority of our troops in any contest in which their qualities could be fairly

tried. This is a great consolation in the midst of all that we have to lament, both in the result of our operations, and in the way of individual loss.

“ I know not what to say about my return. My complaint is very little, but I cannot say that it shews much disposition to go away. I shall take a new opinion to-morrow.”

The last extract on this subject intended to be laid before the reader is from a letter which he addressed to his nephew Mr. R. Lukin, and in which he more immediately refers to the conduct of our retreat : —

“ *Bath, January 27, 1809.*

“ WHAT you say of the late operations I think very likely to be well-grounded. I have found by officers whom I have seen here, that there is a good deal of disposition to blame the manner in which the army has been conducted. Some caution must be used in listening to such opinions, on account of the ill-humour that is apt to be excited among persons unsuccessful, and who have been subjected to considerable privations ; and further, possibly, because a part of those privations may have been the consequence of great, though necessary, strictness in that respect, on the part of the Commander in Chief. After all allowances, however, I can very well conceive that the game might have been played better. Great glory has, at least, been acquired by us, which Buonaparté will not be able altogether to conceal, and which seems

to have left upon the army a delightful impression of their own superiority."

He returned to town about three weeks after the commencement of the session of 1809. Mr. Wardle had previously preferred his charges in the House of Commons, against the Duke of York, as Commander in Chief, and the evidence in support of them had been proceeded upon. This investigation, which occupied much of the time and attention of the House, having at length been brought to a close, Mr. Windham, on the 14th of March, pronounced his judgment on the question, in a speech which certainly deserves the praise of great moderation, as well as of extraordinary acuteness. He lamented that the charges had been brought forward, and strongly reprobated the manner in which they had been attempted to be supported; but though he acquitted the Duke of York of any participation or connivance in the disgraceful transactions which had been laid open, and was therefore ready to negative the address which Mr. Wardle had proposed, yet he thought that the suspicions which were felt, and would continue to be felt, by the country, were such as to render it desirable that His Royal Highness should withdraw from office. He, therefore, could not concur in an amendment which was moved by Mr. Perceval, but found himself obliged very reluctantly to adopt a middle course, by voting for an address which had been suggested by Mr. Bankes. This speech, as it did not exactly fall in with the opinions of either party, has

not hitherto perhaps received all the commendation it deserves. The distinctions laid down in it, on the degree of credibility due to certain descriptions of evidence, will be acknowledged, perhaps, on examination, to be not less profound than ingenious. It might be difficult to find in any professional treatise on the doctrine of evidence, such an union of logical accuracy with minute knowledge of mankind, as was on this occasion applied to the subject by Mr. Windham.

In the course of this session, the bill proposed by Mr. Curwen, for preventing the sale of seats in parliament, afforded him an opportunity of discussing at considerable length the general question of Reform, against which his protest had been frequently and forcibly given. This speech, for close observation of human nature, and for vigour of imagination, is not to be excelled by any in the present collection. As it included a full statement of his opinions on this important subject, he was willing that it should be published in the form of a pamphlet, and he added to it, on that occasion, a note in which he strongly animadverted on some transactions, recently laid open, between the persons who had been principally concerned in the proceedings against the Duke of York.

Lord Erskine's Bill for preventing Cruelty to Animals he opposed with equal wit and argument. But though he thought the subject to be wholly unfit for legislation, no person could be more ready at all times than himself, to resent those acts of cruelty with which our public roads and streets are occasionally disgraced. Indeed, when any incident, of whatever

nature, seemed to call for the interference of a by-stander, he was always prompt to step forward to the relief of the injured party, and by a certain alertness and energy he generally effected the purpose of his interposition*.

The summer of 1809 was remarkable for the complete triumph of France over Austria, and for the failure of our expedition to the Scheldt. To shew that both these calamitous events were calculated upon by Mr. Windham, and that his opinion of the object

* Among the events of this year which were the most painful to Mr. Windham, was the loss of his highly-esteemed friend Dr. Laurence. That very able and excellent man will long be remembered with affection and respect by all who knew him. The vigour of his mind he displayed in the various characters of a wit and a scholar, a civilian and a politician. In the last of these characters, he would perhaps have ranked among the first men of his age, if as a speaker he had not been thought dictatorial and prolix, two qualities which, in the opinion of the majority of the House of Commons, were not to be balanced by knowledge or penetration, however copious or profound. Like his friend and patron Mr. Burke, as Goldsmith whimsically described him,

“ Too deep for his hearers, he went on refining,

“ And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining.”

The harshness with which many members, against their better judgment, were too frequently disposed to treat him, often drew forth from Mr. Windham, who had eminently the ear of the House, a chivalrous defence of his less fortunate friend. In the latter days of Mr. Burke himself, Mr. Windham had been frequently obliged to act the same friendly part on behalf of that illustrious man.

of the latter of them was not at all influenced by its result, it might be sufficient to quote a letter to me written at Beaconsfield, on the 21st July 1809, in which he said, "I tremble for the event of the next Austrian Battle, and am not without my tremors for the fate of the expedition, which, whether successful or not, I am satisfied is a most foolish enterprize." In a subsequent letter, he remarks, in reference to the expedition, that "the grand fault was that which was quite independent of the event;—the sending of the force any where but to Spain." His opinion, however, concerning this question, as well as that of the Austrian campaign, will be collected more in detail from the following letter, addressed to his nephew Captain Lukin, some days before the actual sailing of the expedition:—

" Beaconsfield,

" DEAR WILLIAM,

July 23, 1809.

" I HOLD to my purpose of going to the assizes, and shall accordingly set off for town to-morrow.

" Terrible news this from Germany!—though the learned in London, I understand, (at least those about the offices) do not consider the battle as one of those decisive ones that leave nothing afterwards to be hoped. There is nothing to me in the event that at all comes unexpectedly, however it may be to be lamented. The most discouraging consideration is the dreadful inferiority of talent that appears always to be on the side of the Austrians. Why is Buonaparté to be able to pass the Danube, before the Archduke is

apprized of what he is about? I cannot think that this would have happened the other way.

“ Our expedition I conceive to be a most injudicious one, whatever be the event of it. My opinion is, that the whole should have been sent to Spain; so as not to leave Buonaparté, when he has settled the Austrian business, to begin, as he did last year, on the banks of the Ebro; but to have driven the whole of the French force out of the Peninsula. With a view even to a respite from invasion, the total clearance from Spain would have been of more importance than the destruction of all the vessels and arsenals in the Scheldt, should we even accomplish that purpose. If I could have been tempted by any other object, it would have been (with a view to remote and contingent consequences) to undertake the capture of Belleisle, the troops being afterwards to proceed to Spain.

“ My cold is better, but one of the poor men who were hurt at the fire is dead, and another of them is, I fear, in a bad way. They went into the house not only after I had left it, but after I was gone home*.

“ Yours affectionately,

“ W. WINDHAM.”

The following extract from a letter to his friend, Mr. A. Hudson of Norwich, is submitted to the reader,

* The allusion here is to the fire at Mr. North's house in Conduit-Street, which, as it was connected with the calamitous event that occasioned Mr. Windham's death, will be noticed more particularly hereafter.

not so much for its reference to the Scheldt expedition as for the manner in which it treats of another popular topick, rendered indeed a political one by the turn which is given to it:—

“ *Felbrigg, August 17, 1809.*

“ You have rejoiced no doubt in the new proof, contained in the last Gazette, that the supposed superiority of the French arms, so arrogantly assumed and so meanly acquiesced in for some years past, vanishes before British troops. Though the late victory should produce nothing more (as I fear it will not) than a confirmation of this proof, I don’t know that it is too dearly purchased. Had our expedition gone to Spain, are there not grounds for believing that we might have driven the French out of the Peninsula? Such an achievement would have been a great thing, even though it should have been found impossible, after their complete success elsewhere, to prevent them from returning. I hope our troops at Flushing will either succeed or withdraw, before Buonaparté comes to efface the impression of what has hitherto been done, by some signal victory over them.

“ A smart contest this between Maddox and Richman! Why are we to boast so much of the *native* valour of our troops, as shewn at Talavera, at Vimera, and at Maida, yet to discourage all the practices and habits which tend to keep alive the same sentiments and feelings? The sentiments that filled the minds of the three thousand spectators who attended

the two pugilists, were just the same in kind as those which inspired the higher combatants on the occasions before enumerated. It is the circumstances only in which they are displayed, that make the difference.

“ He that the world subdued, had been

“ But the best wrestler on the green.”

There is no sense in the answer always made to this, “ Are no men brave but boxers ?” Bravery is found in all habits, classes, circumstances, and conditions. But have habits and institutions of one sort no tendency to form it, more than of another ? Longevity is found in persons of habits the most opposite ; but are not certain habits more favourable to it than others ? The courage does not arise from mere boxing, from the mere beating or being beat ; — but from the sentiments excited by the contemplation and cultivation of such practices. Will it make no difference in the mass of a people, whether their amusements are all of a pacific, pleasurable, and effeminate nature, or whether they are of a sort that calls forth a continued admiration of prowess and hardihood ? But when I get on these topics, I never know how to stop ; so I will send my best respects to Mrs. H. and have done.

“ Yours, my dear Sir,

“ with great truth,

“ W. WINDHAM.”

The failure of the Walcheren Expedition was followed by proceedings in the cabinet which led to the

resignation of Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning. A formal offer was now made by Mr. Perceval, on the part of the ministers, to Lords Grenville and Grey, to receive them, with their friends, as members of the administration. The proposal, however, was rejected, and the answer, as well as the note in which the offer was conveyed, were afterwards made public. In Mr. Windham, who had retired for the summer to Felbrigg, these proceedings did not fail to produce a strong degree of interest; but the result which he hoped for was exactly the reverse of that which might have been expected to be foremost in his wishes. The following extracts from letters which I received from him about this time, will serve to shew that nothing was further from his disposition than that avarice of office which to public men is now indiscriminately imputed:—

“ *Felbrigg, September 16, 1809.*

“ I HAVE received from several quarters information of the probability of a change in the ministry, which is far from presenting to me a prospect that I can contemplate with any feelings of pleasure. I have not virtue enough to wish the ministers out, at the risk of being one of those who may be called upon to succeed them. While the change was said to be only partial, I felt sufficiently at my ease; but in the way in which my informants suppose it is to take place, an offer to me, of some sort or another, I take it for granted, must be made. It is one of the things that one neither knows how to accept or decline. If I

could always be as well as I am here, — if Downing Street were in Felbrigg Park, or a dozen miles from London, — I should think much less about it ; but the being called upon to read and to write, to consider and to decide, when one is exhausted and worn down with one's duty in parliament, has something in it that hardly any advantages or gratifications can repay ; and I am afraid my inabilities in point of health or strength are not got the better of, even in the two years that have elapsed since I was last in office. My hope must be, that the intelligence is unfounded, and that the question will not arise ; though I have my misgivings ; and partly from the progress which I understand is making in the Catholic question, and the alarms which I have heard the ministers have conceived on that account. If it should be found that the measure must be submitted to, it will not be unnatural that an entire new ministry should be called in, composed of men decidedly friendly to it. * * * *

“ A slight hurt which I got here in riding retards my return to town. I am, in the meantime, living a most wholesome life, and in many respects a very pleasant and useful one ; — pleasant, as I can recur to pursuits long laid aside, but very ill calculated to prepare me for a return to public life ; — and useful, as I am getting things into order, both within doors and without.”

“ *Felbrigg, September 20, 1809.*

“ I SAY nothing all this while of the intelligence of the day. I lie trembling in my hole, waiting what

shall befall me. The habits of life here are not a good preparation for a return to office, though the health is ; — but even that has a little failed in the present instance ; for, though I am considerably above my rate of London health, I am, from accident, not quite up to that which residence here ought to have given me.”

“ *Felbrigg, October 2, 1809.*

“ I HAVE had letters, with copies of the correspondence, both from Lord Grey and Lord Grenville. I should think that the ministers will contrive to go on, and I cannot but hope it ; for, in the other event, I am sure I don't know what is to be done. I was enumerating, in my answer to Lord Grey, all that I thought could be looked to in that case, and the amount was very limited, and frightfully difficult. * * *

“ I feel but little stomach to return to office, unless I can have *carte blanche* as to my military plans ; and even then the whole is so *be-devilled*, that there is no restoring things to their original state.”

The administration did go on, as Mr. Windham expected and hoped. Mr. Perceval became First Lord of the Treasury upon the death of the Duke of Portland ; the Marquis Wellesley succeeded Mr. Canning in the foreign department ; and the Earl of Liverpool accepted the seals of the war and colonial office, which had been resigned by Lord Castlereagh.

During one of his frequent visits to Mrs. Burke at Beaconsfield, Mr. Windham wrote a letter to me,

which may be inserted, for the sake of a whimsical but forcible and characteristic comment on an event seemingly in itself of very slight importance.

“ Beaconsfield, December 18, 1809.

“ I HAVE been here for some days, and have just been joined by Mrs. Windham, who left London to-day. We are on our way to Bristol, and must lose no time, as Mr. ———, who is here, insists on my being in London during the second week of next month. I shall come very reluctantly, having during this recess indulged myself so much in other pursuits, and contracted, by one means or another, so strong a dislike to the politics of the times, that I am by no means in a frame of mind favourable for the commencement of a parliamentary session. The air of the country, however, will do something, if not to dispose me more to business, at least to render me more capable of it. One of the events that tend to create a great impatience of all public concerns, is this disgraceful and mischievous triumph of the O. P.'s, and the humiliating submission of the managers. Their conduct is quite unaccountable, unless they have secret information that the juries at the sessions would follow the example of Mr. Clifford's jury; and even then the sacrifice of Brandon is something so scandalous, that no consideration of interest can excuse it. I am the more alive, I suppose, to this defeat of the managers, because I see it as a rehearsal of what is meant for higher performers; the managers being the government; the new prices, the taxes; Brandon,

myself perhaps; and the O.P.'s exactly the same description of persons as at present. There is one difference I hope; — that I shall never come on like poor Brandon with an apology. In all other respects, it seems to me to present but too sure a presage of the fate of the country, contemptible as the thing is in itself."

" Believe me yours,

" very faithfully,

" W. WINDHAM."

This was one of the last letters which I received from him. He returned to town soon after Christmas, and at the commencement of the session of 1810 was at his post. He took an early occasion to express in very strong terms his disapprobation of the object and conduct of the expedition to the Scheldt. The vote for an enquiry upon the subject of that armament, ought, he contended, to be "carried by acclamation;" the British army he described as having been "marched to its grave; — to be extinguished amidst the pestilential air of Walcheren; — to go out like a candle in a vault." But the Battle of Talavera, on the other hand, called from him a warm panegyric, both on the skill of Lord Wellington, and the gallantry of the troops. In this speech, which did honour to his feelings as an Englishman, he dated the military renown of our later days from our achievements in Egypt; — the Battle of Maida confirmed it; — and those of Vimeira, Corunna, and Talavera, he declared he would not exchange for a "whole archipelago of

sugar-islands." This decided preference of national glory to mere acquisition of wealth or territory, may be considered as the key-stone which supported the whole fabric of his political opinions.

The part which he took on a subsequent question exposed him to much temporary unpopularity. In the prosecution of the enquiry which the House of Commons instituted on the subject of the Scheldt Expedition, Mr. Yorke thought it necessary to move daily the standing order for excluding strangers. This measure was reprobated by Mr. Sheridan, who proposed that the standing order should be referred to a committee of privileges. Mr. Windham, who had always professed to dislike the custom of reporting debates in the newspapers, not only warmly opposed Mr. Sheridan's motion, but used some expressions by which the reporters in the gallery considered themselves to be personally calumniated. Their resentment, as might be expected, broke forth in daily attacks on him in the public prints; and they soon came to a formal agreement that his speeches should no longer be reported. For these marks of vengeance, Mr. Windham had fully prepared himself, and he imputed no blame to those who inflicted them*. To the

* Among many letters which Mr. Windham received from those who considered themselves aggrieved by this attack, there was one which he spoke of with approbation. As it was couched in terms of temperate and respectful expostulation, he answered it in a conciliatory manner; regretting that observations of a general nature should have wounded the feelings of a person whose education and respectable character appeared justly to exempt him from any application of them.

honour of the conductors of the daily press, it should be remembered that a few months afterwards, they buried their resentments in the grave of their illustrious adversary, and joined with the public voice in lamenting the loss of his talents and virtues.

By the temporary exclusion of Mr. Windham's speeches from the newspapers, some valuable ones have been wholly lost, while of others there have been preserved only a few slight and unsatisfactory fragments. Only one, and that a very short one, remains entire, namely, his eulogium on the character and conduct of the Roman Catholics of England. From that body (whose claims, it will be remembered, received his warm support in 1790) he now presented two petitions, praying, in loyal and respectful language, for the removal of the pains and disabilities to which they were liable by law, on account of their religious principles. Mr. Windham's speech on this occasion was preserved by Mr. Butler of Lincoln's Inn, in a late valuable publication*, and has been obligingly communicated by him to the author of this narrative.

Another speech, which he made in support of Lord Porchester's motion, censuring the expedition against the Scheldt, is represented by those who heard it, to have been one of the most eloquent ever delivered in parliament. It arrested and fully recompensed the attention of the house for nearly two hours. He was

* "Historical Account of the Laws against the Roman Catholics of England." 8vo. 1809.

urged by some of his friends to prepare it for publication in the form of a pamphlet, but his answer was, that as the subject was temporary, so was the speech, and he felt no anxiety to preserve it. A short and imperfect report of it was given some time afterwards in one of the newspapers *, and will be found in the ensuing collection. On the result of the enquiry, the ministers were successful by a majority of forty votes.

In the proceedings of the House of Commons against Sir Francis Burdett, for a breach of their privileges, Mr. Windham stood forward in maintaining what he conceived to be the rights of Parliament, and concurred in the vote which was finally agreed upon, for committing Sir Francis a prisoner to the Tower. His speech on this occasion is said to have been a highly animated one, but no part of it has been preserved.

The practice of mutilating the printed reports of parliamentary proceedings continued but for little more than two months; after which Mr. Windham's speeches were again suffered to appear, as well as Mr. Tierney's, which had shared in the proscription made by the reporters. On the 1st of May 1810, we find Mr. Windham opposing the second reading of a bill which had been brought in by Sir Samuel Romilly, as part of his plan for reducing the number of capital punishments. This Mr. Windham considered as a measure of dangerous innovation, and in resisting it, he took occasion to avow his belief that the mischievous

* The British Press.

effects of the French Revolution had not yet ceased. That Revolution, he said, had still an existence, — “it was above us, and beneath us; — it was without us and within us; — it was every where round about us.” The bill was lost by a majority of two.

He spoke for the last time in the House of Commons, on the 11th of May 1810. The question before the house was, the course which it would be expedient to take in relation to the actions which had been brought against the Speaker and the Serjeant at Arms by Sir Francis Burdett. Mr. Windham, as it will be readily conceived, asserted the dignity of Parliament, and the sacredness of its privileges.

A painful narrative remains to be related. The calamitous event which caused Mr. Windham's last illness took place a few months previous to the period down to which the circumstances of his political life have just been carried. It was about midnight on the 8th of July 1809, that in walking home from an evening party, he observed a house in Conduit-Street to be on fire. He hastened to the spot, to render his assistance, and found that the house in flames was so near to that of his friend, the Honourable Frederick North, as to threaten its destruction. Knowing that Mr. North (who was then on a voyage in the Mediterranean) possessed a most valuable library, Mr. Windham determined, with the assistance of some persons belonging to a volunteer corps, whom he selected from the crowd, to make an effort for the preservation of it. After four hours' labour, four-fifths of the books were saved. He did not quit the house

till the flames, which finally consumed it, had spread so extensively as to render his further exertions highly dangerous. During the time that he was employed in this arduous undertaking, it happened most unfortunately, that, by a fall, he received a blow on the hip, but not of so painful a nature as to occasion any relaxation of his efforts. The next day the author of this narrative called on him, and found him complaining, not of the hurt he had received, but of a cold which was the consequence of his exposure to the weather, the night having been very rainy. He seemed to enjoy the whimsical association in the newspapers of "Mr. Windham and the volunteers," but lamented that two of the persons who had assisted him had received considerable injury *. To those unfortunate persons (one of whom afterwards died) he shewed the most kind and unremitting attentions. His cold continued to be very troublesome to him for some time, but from the blow on his hip, he, for many months, appeared to suffer no inconvenience whatever, though it occasioned a tumour which, in the following Spring, had increased to a considerable size.

In May 1810, Mr. Windham found it necessary to give his serious attention to the tumour which had been thus collected. Mr. Cline (whom he had consulted upon it two months before) gave it as his opinion that, in order to prevent dangerous consequences, an immediate operation was necessary; — and his advice

* See in a preceding page, the concluding paragraph of his letter to Captain Lukin, of the 23d July 1809.

was confirmed by that of four out of six eminent surgeons whom Mr. Windham separately consulted. The two who thought that an operation was not required were, Mr. Wilson, the anatomical lecturer, and Mr. Phillips, of Pall-Mall. Dr. Blane (Mr. Windham's own physician) and Dr. Baillie coincided in opinion with the majority of the surgeons, so that, in fact, seven out of nine professional men recommended the operation. It is not at all surprizing, therefore, that Mr. Windham, whose courage was on all occasions remarkable, should have determined on submitting at once to the dangers of the knife, rather than linger on in doubt and apprehension.

Before his decision was acted upon, he took pains to inform himself concerning some cases of persons who had died under operations or from the effects of them ; and he requested this writer to make a particular enquiry respecting an instance supposed to be of the latter kind, which had recently occurred in Norfolk. He communicated his intention to very few persons, besides the professional men whom he had consulted ; and the deepest anxiety with which he seemed to be impressed, was that of sparing Mrs. Windham the terrors which a knowledge of the event could not fail to excite in a mind of extraordinary sensibility and tenderness. He conveyed her to Beaconsfield, on a visit to her friend Mrs. Burke, with whom he left her, on a plea of business, and arrived in town on Friday the 11th of May. On the following Sunday, he attended at the Charter-house, and received the sacrament, which was administered to him privately by the

Reverend Dr. Fisher, the master of that institution, with whom he had been intimately acquainted from his youth. The remaining days before the operation was to take place he employed in arranging papers, in making a codicil to his will, and in writing many letters, some of which were addressed to his nearest relatives, to be opened in case the event should prove fatal to him. The following letter has been obligingly communicated to the author by Colonel Harvey, of Catton, in Norfolk, to whom Mr. Windham addressed it the day before he underwent the operation. It contains an allusion, as the reader will perceive, to the question of parliamentary reform, which was intended to be brought forward in the House of Commons in the course of a few days.

“ *Pall Mall,*

“ DEAR SIR,

“ *May 16, 1810.*

“ I WOULD very gladly attend the business which you mention, and with every disposition to find the merits such as you describe, but I am afraid I must to-morrow go through an operation which will disable me from attendance in the house till long after the business in question will be decided, as well as others which, without disparagement to yours, I should have been still more anxious to attend to. If our reformers carry their madness and folly now or in any subsequent year, there is an end, be assured, of the stability of this constitution, and we shall fall from confusion to confusion till we are either sunk into complete revo-

lutionary anarchy, or are settled under Buonaparté. We shall probably enjoy the blessings of both ; — and after the taste of the former, namely of republican and revolutionary anarchy, or government as they will call it, there are many who will think even a government like Buonaparté's a blessing.

“ These are my first sentiments ; — I may also say my last and dying sentiments, for though the operation itself which I am about to submit to, is not a dangerous one, there cannot be so great pain as must I fear be gone through, without some danger. It is, as far as I should collect, something of the same sort as that which poor John Gurney underwent and fell a victim to.

“ I had thought at one time to defer it till I might have entered my last protest against such madness, and have tried what I could do to satisfy men's minds that it was madness. But I found so long a delay could not be incurred ; so I must only hope the best for the country and for myself.

“ Yours, dear Sir,

“ with great truth, &c. &c.

“ W. WINDHAM *.”

* To the above proof of the consistency of Mr. Windham's opinions, at the end of thirty years after they had been formed, on a leading political question, the author expected to be able to add a letter on the subject of the Catholic claims. The letter alluded to was addressed to Edward Jerningham Esq. who acted as Secretary to the English Catholic Committee, and it was finished by Mr. Windham just before the commencement of the operation.

On Thursday, the 17th of May 1810, the operation was performed by Mr. Lynn, in the presence of Dr. Blane, Mr. Home, and Mr. Pilliner, Mr. Windham's apothecary. The tumour was skilfully extracted, but having been very deeply seated, and attached to the ligaments of the hip joint, the operation was necessarily painful. Mr. Windham, however, bore the pain with the greatest resolution; and during a pause, occasioned by a consultation upon the necessity of making a further incision, he even joked with his perilous situation. The tumour proved to be schirrous, of the shape of a turkey's egg, but even larger. The successful performance of the operation was immediately announced to Mr. Windham's intimate friends by Mr. Edmund Byng (Mrs. Windham's nephew), of whose friendly offices he had taken the precaution to avail himself. Mrs. Windham, according to an arrangement which he had previously made, returned to town the next morning, and was informed of what had taken place. For a few days, appearances were not unfavourable, though the wound did not heal with what is called the *first intention*, and though Mr. Windham suffered greatly from restlessness and an irritable state of the nerves. But the hopes even of his most sanguine friends, soon began to give way. A symptomatic fever came on, and upon the ninth day he was pronounced to be in great

Unluckily it has been mislaid or removed, and all search for it on the part of those who obligingly offered it for insertion in this work has been unavailing.

danger. On the following day the symptoms were judged to be less unfavourable, but others of an alarming kind soon succeeded, and the medical attendants (to whom were now added Dr. Baillie and Sir Henry Hallford) no longer entertained hopes of his recovery. From this time, the fever abated, the pulse became firmer and better, and the patient even began to take and enjoy nourishment; yet in spite of these otherwise flattering circumstances, the state of the wound, which had never suppurated, and the total inability of nature to make any effort towards relieving it, were symptoms that excited no feelings but those of despair. Mr. Windham himself considered his case to be hopeless very soon after the performance of the operation, and when, at a later period, the attending surgeon, availing himself of some favourable circumstances, endeavoured to impress him with a less gloomy opinion, he said, "Mr. Lynn, you fight the battle well, but all won't do." He perfectly well knew the feebleness of his own constitution. Though he had possessed great muscular strength, and had lived a life of temperance and activity, he had never overcome the internal debility left by the fever which had attacked him at the age of twenty-eight. The complaint too, affecting his hip, which he had laboured under in the Autumn of 1808, has been supposed to be materially connected with that from which he was now suffering. So slight a contusion as that which he had received, could not have caused such disastrous effects, had it not met with a frame and constitution previously disposed to produce them.

While he lay in this hopeless condition, nothing could exceed the concern which was expressed by almost all classes of the inhabitants of London; nor was this sentiment narrowed by party feelings, for every man who spoke of him seemed to be his friend. From the commencement of his illness, the number of anxious enquirers who had thronged the door to obtain a sight of the daily reports of the physicians, would almost be thought incredible. The watchful solicitude of his professional attendants ought not to pass unnoticed; and in mentioning the unceasing anxiety of personal friends, it would be unpardonable to omit the names of Lord Fitzwilliam and Mr. Elliot*. The latter was the kind and soothing companion of the sick chamber. It is gratifying to add, that, among those who shared in these feelings, was His Majesty, who took every opportunity of making enquiries of the physicians concerning the progress of Mr. Windham's illness, pronouncing him (as he had done on a former occasion) to be a "real patriot and a truly honest man."

On the 26th of May, notwithstanding his debility, Mr. Windham was able to maintain a long conference with his nephew, Mr. Robert Lukin, during which he expressed himself on many topics with his usual felicity and spirit. Upon this occasion he pointed out to Mr. Lukin his mathematical manuscripts, explained generally the nature and object of them, and ex-

* The Right Honourable William Elliot, M. P. for Peterborough.

pressed his wish that they might be carefully examined, with a view to ascertain whether some parts of them might not be found worth preserving.

On Sunday, the 3d of June, his dissolution appeared to be fast approaching. It was on the evening of that day that the physicians and surgeons assembled in his chamber for the last time. Soon after they had left it, I had an afflicting opportunity of witnessing his dying condition, in which, however, none of the terrors and few even of the milder signs of death were visible. Though his articulation was a little imperfect, his voice was not deficient in strength; and though his countenance was slightly altered, it retained much of its peculiar animation. He was evidently free from pain, and cheered by feelings of tranquil resignation. During about twenty minutes, he spoke many times, not without vivacity, and when I was about to leave the chamber, he pressed my hand with a degree of firmness which seemed at variance with the intimation which he too plainly meant to convey to me — that I should see him no more. It was about half past ten o'clock when I left him, and after that time he is represented as having spoken but little. Being placed by Mr. Lynn, in a favourable situation for sleep, he said, "I thank you, this is the last trouble I shall give you." It is added, that he then fell into a doze, or stupor, and expired without pain or emotion the next morning (Monday, June the 4th) at about twenty-five minutes past eleven *.

* It has been mentioned, as an extraordinary fact, that he had predicted he should die on the King's birth-day. The truth is,

Some apology, perhaps, is necessary for the minuteness with which the above circumstances have been detailed. It may be confidently hoped, however, that those who knew and loved Mr. Windham's character, will not think it uninteresting in the hours of sickness and of death. That he died as every good man and sincere christian might wish to die, is a fact that may furnish grateful and useful reflections to all.

He had just completed the sixtieth year of his age. By his will, which was made some years before his death, and by two codicils which he had recently added to it, he gave to Mrs. Windham, for her life, his whole real estate, including a venerable mansion, with an extensive and finely-situated park at Felbrigg, besides a considerable property in that neighbourhood, and at Sudbury, on the borders of Suffolk and Essex. At Mrs. Windham's decease, he directed that his property, charged with some temporary provisions in favour of other relations, should devolve on Captain William Lukin, of the royal navy, the eldest son of the Dean of Wells, Mr. Windham's half brother. On his accession to the estates, Captain Lukin is to assume the name and arms of Windham; and in failure of his male issue, there is a remainder in tail in favour of

that on the Friday before his death, he enquired the day of the month, and being told it was the first of June, he said, "Then I shall die on the fourth." It was quite natural that he should be struck with the near approach of so remarkable a day, and the event proved that he measured his remaining strength with great accuracy.

Mr. Windham's early and very intimate friend, G. J. Cholmondeley Esq., with further remainders to the Earl of Egremont and other distant relations. The executors named in the will were, the Honourable H. Legge and William Palmer Esq.

The loss which the country had sustained in Mr. Windham, was impressively noticed in both houses of parliament. On the 6th of June, in the House of Lords, Earl Grey pronounced an eulogium on his deceased friend's character, in a manner which reflected the greatest honour on his feelings. And on the following day, Lord Milton (for whom Mr. Windham had a high regard) distinguished himself in the other house, by an eloquent and affectionate delineation of those public and private virtues which Mr. Windham so eminently possessed, and to which also Mr. Canning bore a generous and powerful testimony *.

His funeral was directed by his will to be private, and without ostentation. Accordingly, his remains were attended into Norfolk by no other friends than Mr. Robert Lukin, his nephew, (Captain Lukin being at sea,) Mr. Edmund Byng, nephew to Mrs. Windham, and Mr. Budd, who was Mr. Windham's solicitor and land agent. They were joined at Norwich by Mr. Hudson and Captain Browne. At that city, where

* A report of these Speeches will be found in the Appendix (E). Mr. Yorke, Mr. Barham, Mr. C. W. Wynne, and other members, availed themselves of other opportunities to express their full concurrence with the general feeling.

the corpse rested for one night, a general feeling of regret was strongly excited, and the procession was accompanied through the streets the next morning by a very numerous train of spectators. On its way to Felbrigg, it was joined by the tenantry (not one of whom was absent) and by other respectable persons in the neighbourhood, on horseback, amounting in all to about ninety. The attendance of these persons, though it did not strictly accord with the directions of the will, could not have been refused without great unkindness. The corpse was at length deposited in the family vault at Felbrigg church, the funeral service being performed by the Reverend George Way. The park was thronged with spectators, anxious to pay the last tribute of respect to the memory of one who, though distinguished in the great world by his talents and accomplishments, was better known to his neighbours in the endearing character of a kind landlord and a good man.

OF the Character of Mr. Windham some few memorials will perhaps be looked for, in addition to those which may have been incidentally preserved in the preceding narrative. To describe him truly as he was, is a task however which it is more pleasing to undertake, than easy to achieve.

In his person he was tall and well proportioned. Having in his youth been eminently skilful in manly exercises, he had thence acquired in his deportment a happy union of strength and ease, of agility and grace-

fulness, which never forsook him. The form of his features was singularly interesting; and the penetrating vivacity of his eye gave a faithful indication of the corresponding qualities of his mind*.

His address and conversation were fascinating to all classes of persons;—as well to the grave as to the gay—to the uninformed as to the learned—to the softer as to the sterner sex. His manners delighted all circles, from the royal drawing-room to the village-green; though in all circles they were still the same. As the polish of his address was not artificial, it was alike pleasing to all. No man had ever less pride, in its offensive sense. He would repel flippancy and

* There are three large prints of Mr. Windham before the public, all of them in mezzotinto. One of them is a head engraved by J. Jones, from a picture painted many years ago by Sir Joshua Reynolds, for Mr. G. Cholmondeley; another, also a head, was engraved by Say, from a painting by Hoppner, in the possession of Lord Mulgrave; and the third is a whole length by Reynolds, from the portrait mentioned in a preceding page to have been painted by Hoppner, for a public hall at Norwich. None of these prints are without merit, but the second (which has been reduced for this work) is thought to convey the most accurate likeness. There is also a fine picture by Mr. Lawrence, from which a very good engraving by Reynolds has been executed, but not yet published. After Mr. Windham's death, Mr. Nollekens had permission to take a mask from his countenance; it was unfortunately made too late to answer the desired purpose, but Mr. Nollekens has finished a spirited bust, chiefly taken from one which he executed many years ago, yet so well corrected from memory as to give a faithful representation of Mr. Windham, as he appeared just before the fatal operation.

arrogance, and would very keenly point his reprobation of what seemed mean or dishonourable ; but he never measured his courtesy by the various degrees of rank, of talents, or of wealth, possessed by those to whom he addressed himself.

Of his acquirements it is needless to speak much at length. That he was " a scholar, and a ripe and good one," there are abundant testimonies to prove ; nor did his classical attainments, great as they were universally allowed to be, exceed his skill in the various branches of mathematical science. That skill the public, it is hoped, will be enabled to appreciate at some future time, by the publication of the manuscript treatises which are in the hands of his executors. His reading latterly was miscellaneous and desultory ; but what he hastily acquired, he accurately retained, and aptly applied in illustration of his opinions and arguments.

His taste, in general, in the fine arts, was eminently pure, delicate, and discriminating. For music indeed he had no relish beyond a simple ballad. I once heard him remark, that the four greatest men whom he had known, derived no pleasure from music. Mr. Burke, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, were the persons whom he thus distinguished.

Upon what is generally called style in writing, he set but little value. His own practice was, to take plain words, in preference to learned ones ; to disregard the construction of sentences ; and to adopt popular idioms whenever they would aptly express his meaning. In his language he was as truly British as

in his politics. His disgust was strongly excited by modern innovations of French words and phrases; and he disliked them even as terms of art, where English ones could be found to supply their places. For the word *sortie*, for instance, he would uniformly substitute "sally." But nothing so highly offended him, as any careless or irreverent use of the name of the Creator. I remember that on reading a letter addressed to him, in which the words, "My God!" had been made use of on a light occasion, he hastily snatched a pen, and before he would finish the letter, blotted out the misplaced exclamation.

Of Mr. Windham's character as an orator, the reader of this work is furnished with such ample means of judging for himself, that it is wholly unnecessary here to enter into any investigation of it. Something, however, may be said concerning the effect of his eloquence in the House of Commons, and in this respect a very high authority on such a subject * has pronounced that, "if it was not the most commanding that that house had ever heard, it was the most insinuating." His manly figure, and his fluent and graceful delivery, were important points in his favour; but on the other hand, the want of a full and sonorous voice rendered him sometimes difficult to be understood in many parts of the house, particularly in the gallery. This physical defect, added to a parenthetical mode of speaking, and the occasional subtilty of his logical distinctions, may account for the

* Mr. Canning. See his speech in Appendix (E).

very imperfect manner in which his speeches were too commonly reported in the newspapers. The reporters often caught little more from him, than those playful allusions and whimsical quotations which diverted the house, but which he really used merely by way of illustration. These, however, were strung together in the newspapers, unaccompanied with the arguments which they were intended to illustrate; — so that a speech thus reported would frequently appear more like a leaf torn out of a jest book, than a logical and profound political discourse, as it probably was when it was delivered. Nothing was more foreign from Mr. Windham's habits, than to jest for the sake of jesting; — his wit was always subservient to his argument.

The reason which has rendered it unnecessary to give an elaborate description of Mr. Windham's eloquence, will equally serve to relieve me from a much weightier task — that of examining his political opinions. I will venture, however, to suggest, that the ruling passion — the clue which, “once found, unravels all the rest,” — will be met with in the preference which he gave to the honour and military renown of his country, above every other state of things in which a nation is said to be great and prosperous. To apply this principle to the whole course of his public opinions would involve a discussion much too ample for the limits of this work; — but I cannot avoid remarking, that his notions respecting the common people directly flowed from it. No man could really love the people more than Mr. Windham loved

them ; — he did not, it is true, wish them to become statesmen or philosophers ; — he desired to see them honest, active, chearful and contented — sensible of the blessings they enjoyed, and capable of defending them. Feeling that

— a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied,

he deprecated all attempts which were made to deprive them of their accustomed sports and exercises. From the practice of those exercises, resulted, in his opinion, not only much of the personal bravery of Englishmen, but also that hatred of bloodshed and assassination, and that humane forbearance in victory, by which the British character is happily distinguished from that of many other nations. Nothing roused his indignation more than the vexatious spirit of interference with the holiday-enjoyments of the poor, which he thought some of our magistrates had lately shewn a strong desire to exercise. The suppression of a village-hop, or horse-race, or even a boxing-match or bull-bait, while the magistrate was quietly enjoying his own ball or hunting party, he thought an act of the most scandalous injustice and oppression. In short, he loved the British peasant, and wished to see him vigorous on the green, and independent in his cottage — respected for his loyalty, and formidable by his prowess.

Mr. Windham's political opinions have been often charged with inconsistency. It is not surprising that such a charge should proceed from persons who only look to the distinctions of Whig and Tory, or to those

other distinctions which, for nearly thirty years, have been sufficiently known and defined under the names of Pittite and Foxite. That he sometimes agreed with Mr. Fox, and sometimes with Mr. Pitt, is with such persons a decisive proof of inconsistency! Those who will go deeper, making measures, not men, their rule for deciding the question, will perhaps find that, during a long political life, hardly any public man has less differed from himself than Mr. Windham has done. From the outset of his career to the close of it, he was the uniform enemy of Parliamentary Reform. In his zeal for the improvement of the army, his attachment to the crown and aristocracy, and his protection of the real comforts of the common people, he will be found to have been equally consistent. That in the course of twenty or thirty years, he found reason to change some few of his opinions, may be very true; but who has not done this, even on subjects of the highest importance? It must be admitted that he altered his mind on the question of the Slave Trade, which he at first thought should be abolished instantaneously, though he afterwards wished the abolition to be subsequent to an attempt for ameliorating the condition of slavery. But instances like this will weigh but little against a mass of facts in the opposite scale.

In speaking of Mr. Windham's public measures, it must not be forgotten that it was on those for the improvement of the army that he relied for his reputation as a minister. He publicly declared that, "like the eminent Italian musician, who had a piece of music inscribed on his tomb, or the Dutch mathema-

tician who had a calculation for his epitaph, he should desire no other monument as a statesman than that system."

The quality, perhaps, by which Mr. Windham was more remarkably distinguished from most other public men, was his intrepidity. His political, like his personal courage, was unbounded; and he seemed to seek, rather than to shun, opportunities of displaying it. Had he condescended to court popularity, there can be no doubt that he would have attained his object; and it might have enabled him to become the leader of a party in the state. That was a situation, however, for which he had neither ambition, nor the necessary arts. He disliked both the management and the sacrifices which, in such an employment, are indispensably requisite.

His habits of business were by no means regular, yet he could never justly be said to be idle. He would have been able to transact more business, had he been less scrupulous. It was his custom to begin a transaction with more care and nicety than could afterwards be found practicable in the conclusion of it.

Notwithstanding his keenness as a debater, no man ever mixed less of private enmity with his public differences. He generally spoke of his adversaries with liberality, and often with kindness. There was no system of opinions which he so strongly condemned as he did Sir Francis Burdett's; yet I remember that he once softened the asperity of some remarks which were made by another person on that Baronet's con-

duct ; adding good humouredly, " I suspect, after all, I have a *sneaking kindness* for Sir Francis."

It now remains to speak of his domestic virtues, in doing which it will be difficult to use any other language than that of unqualified eulogium. His tenderness as a husband and relative, his kindness as a friend and patron, his condescending attention to inferiors, his warm sympathy with the unfortunate, are so many themes of praise, which it would be more agreeable than necessary to dwell upon *. The sense which he entertained of the importance of religion, and which he strongly marked by one of the concluding acts of his life, will serve to complete the character of a man who had scarcely an enemy, except on political grounds, and had more personal friends warmly attached to him, than almost any man of the age.

His talents, accomplishments, and virtues, have been happily summed up, by describing him as the true model of an English gentleman ; and it has been well observed, that if the country had been required to produce, in a trial of strength with another nation, some individual who was at once eminent for learning, taste, eloquence, wit, courage, and personal accomplishments, the choice must have fallen on Mr. Windham. He was the admirable Crichton of his age and country.

* As testimonials of the kindness of his nature, two letters of a private sort, one occasioned by the death of a niece, and the other by that of a friend, will be given in the Appendix (F).

All this, it may be said, is the language of panegyric. The writer is aware that it is so, but he cannot feel that it is not also the language of truth. If gratitude for bounties received shall appear to have blinded his judgment, the error he trusts will be forgiven. Yet he will not readily consent to believe that he has been erring, in bestowing praise where those whose authority is every where respected, have thought it was justly due. It would be highly culpable in him to be less forward than others, in yielding his humble and grateful tribute to the memory of one whom he has every motive to revere, and of whom he feels it might be said, as of the Roman General,

——— 'twere a concealment
Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement
To hide your doings ; and to silence that
Which to the spire and top of praises vouch'd
Would seem but modest.

APPENDIX.

(A.) Page 7.

Mr. Windbam's first public Speech.

(Copied from the Norfolk Chronicle.)

ON Wednesday, January 28, 1798, there was a respectable meeting of Gentlemen at the Maid's Head, Norwich, and the Swan, but not so numerous at either as was expected. As the latter was called with a professed intention to be directed in its measures by the conduct and resolutions that should be pursued at the former, the Gentlemen at the Swan immediately determined to go down to the Maid's Head, where, after Sir John Wodehouse was requested to take the Chair, the business was opened by Lord Townshend, Master of the Ordnance, who set forth, that from the indisposition of the Lord Lieutenant of the county*, and the absence of another Noble Peer, higher in rank than himself, who now filled the most eminent station in another kingdom†, it became incumbent upon him to request a meeting for the purpose of consulting upon the means of affording such assistance as should best enable Government, at this critical juncture, to exert itself for the support of the constitutional authority of the British empire; that the unhappy war in

* Earl of Orford.

† Earl of Buckinghamshire.

which we were engaged with America was unavoidably attended with large expence, had been followed with a destruction of men and a waste of force, which was much to be lamented; and that our natural enemies, it was to be apprehended, would avail themselves of our situation, and therefore it was become necessary to be provided with a force that would enable us to resist any attack that might be made upon us at home: he then submitted to the company, whether opening a subscription for the purpose of raising levies to fill up those corps which had been considerably reduced, and might be expected to return from America, would not, as it appeared to him, be the least exceptionable and most beneficial mode. His Lordship was seconded by the Honourable Henry Hobart, brother to the Earl of Buckinghamshire. Upon which Mr. WINDHAM, of Felbrigg, addressed himself to the Chair, premising, that from the personal affection, and hereditary attachment which he bore to the Noble Lord, it gave him concern to differ from him totally, respecting the conduct we should observe on the present momentous and alarming situation of public affairs. He begged leave to take a retrospect of the measures that had led to it; he should not however enter into the wide and beaten field of disputation, concerning the right of the British parliament to tax the Americans, but should confine himself principally to the means that had been used, and the arguments advanced to establish and enforce it. At the commencement of the dispute we were told by administration that the resistance to the act for laying a duty there, was only from the licentiousness of a mob, such as we had frequently known in this country, and might as readily be quelled; that all persons of property acquiesced in our authority, and a military force should no sooner appear, than they would gladly embrace our protection from a lawless and tumultuous rabble: that should the resistance be general, as was pre-

tended, ten, or perhaps two, regiments would bring them to subjection without effusion of blood. One Gentleman asserted that he would undertake to march through the country with 5,000 men unmolested; another, more strongly to express our own importance and their insignificance, said that a grenadier's cap would awe them into obedience. Compare these wild and fallacious declamations, with many other contemptuous and unmerited reproaches cast upon this much injured people; a people, whose affection from their first establishment had been uniformly, and with filial warmth, devoted to your interest, whose spirit had been ever associated, whose courage had been exerted and distinguished, and whose blood had been shed and mingled with your own, in support of the common cause of the Empire; from a monopoly of whose trade you had derived solid, extensive, increasing benefits, and but for despotic and vindictive measures which have been adopted, as permanent as they were beneficial; yet these people, although provoked by reiterated acts of oppression, petitioned and remonstrated in the most respectful and dutiful manner, without exciting any disposition here to preserve their freedom and tranquillity; on the contrary, with inveterate and deliberate malignity on the part of administration; they were pursued, and that spirit of resistance to arbitrary rule was roused in America, which had often been exerted in this country, and to which Great Britain is indebted for its freedom and its fame: since they were driven to take up arms, let us, I say, compare the promises, the assurances of ministers from one year to another with events. When the principal, the whole force of this country that could possibly be spared, had been exerted, 50,000 land forces, 20,000 seamen, more than 100 vessels of different force had been employed in the third campaign, and what has been done, what have we reaped but disappointment, shame and dishonour, such as never before stained

the British name and the British arms? One army of 10,000 disciplined men, under the command of officers of experience, with a well served force of artillery, was in the course of a few weeks absolutely annihilated, and by whom? By the peasantry of the country, hastily assembled, who destroyed an army on which the principal expectation and dependance was placed in the middle of last summer, and which we thought had nothing to do but to drive the rabble before it. I mean not to cast reflections on the conduct of our officers, or the bravery of the private men; after enduring unparalleled hardships and fatigues, they have every where effected all that was in the power of men. Let us next examine what has been accomplished by General Howe; early or rather late in the season, he went out to seek, and he found General Washington, but in such a situation that he deemed it not prudent to attack him; he returned and was obliged to proceed with his troops upon a tedious and perilous voyage; he arrived at the place of destination, and landed without resistance; he marched forward, attacked, and was attacked; he conquered, and after much loss has got possession of an open town, from whence he made another forward movement with intention again to bring the enemy to action, has again returned without effecting his purpose, and has since been obliged, at an enormous expence, to erect redoubts for the security of his own troops against the attempts of the enemy. Such disgraceful and repeated disappointments will not convince us of the impracticability of conquering the Americans: if you could not subjugate them when in a raw undisciplined state, is it not the extreme of folly and madness to expect it now they have a regular established force? I will not contend whether they are as good soldiers as European troops; they are disciplined, they are assisted by foreign officers, they have artillery, and are yet furnished with every means of continuing

the war. After such delusions, after a waste of the most liberal and unrestrained grants from parliament, what are we now called together for? Why! ministry has the effrontery to apply for voluntary contributions, unconstitutional benevolences, and urge their request with an open avowal that this country is in danger of a hostile attack from its natural enemies, who have hitherto availed themselves of these advantages which we have thrown into their hands by our own folly, oppression and cruelty. This, indeed, was obvious, was predicted, was warned against at the beginning of the dispute, but was ridiculed as an idea which only the gloomy brain of patriotism could conceive or cherish. But, Sir, if such really is our condition, why is our security to be rested upon troops raised in the Highlands of Scotland, who are to act in conjunction with those of the very loyal towns of Manchester and Liverpool. For what purpose was the militia established: to what end was an act passed, impowering His Majesty to call it out upon the present emergency? Why is the service of that constitutional body of forces, the natural security of this country, not called for at this time? As a Briton, as an inhabitant of Norfolk, and as bearing a commission in that corps, I feel this indignity; every member of it in the kingdom must feel, and ought to resent it. I would wish to discountenance this and every like attempt of the kind, as having a tendency to protract, instead of bringing to a speedy issue this unnatural, fruitless, and ruinous war, which is now acknowledged by the authors of it to have reduced us to a state of insecurity, to the verge of a precipice. It is not, Sir, that any sum of money which shall be raised here will avail, or even be auxiliary to the purpose avowed, it is not intended, nor expected it should, by the proposers; respecting America it will be innocent, it will be as the small dust of the balance; but the countenance, the weight, the authority of the county of Norfolk is wanted to give a sanction

to measures which we ought to reprobate, and to support men in places who have given the most glaring proofs of incapacity and temerity, and afforded the strongest presumption of being inimical to the constitution of the kingdom, and whose removal will be a considerable step to bring about what every one seems desirous of, and what I am sure we are all interested in, peace and reconciliation with America. I do therefore give my protest against the scheme that has been proposed, as I trust will most Gentlemen of property, judgment and independency.

Mr. Coke, member for the county, declared his concurrence in those sentiments. — Lord Townshend replied, in vindication of the part he had taken; and with an avowal of that sincerity in his conduct which we may presume is universally allowed him, he said, that he was no minister nor acquainted with the secrets of the cabinet, he was only a titular counsellor, but that could he conceive there was a single member of it, who possessed the malignity of heart which had been imputed to them, no man would more readily concur to reprobate and procure his dismissal; that he had the honour to have taken an active part in reviving that respectable and constitutional body the militia, and would, upon any requisite occasion, relinquish every other engagement, to act as an officer in that corps, but that the calling the men from their families, from their looms and other occupations, might at this time be attended with consequences injurious to the manufactures and agriculture of the kingdom. He concluded with a handsome and liberal eulogium on the abilities and comprehensive knowledge, the elegant and nervous elocution which the Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Windham) had displayed upon this occasion, and candidly assured him he was convinced that he spoke from principle and conviction; His Lordship presaged, that the county of Norfolk would derive advantage and himself

honour from the maturity of judgment and integrity of heart which the Honourable Gentleman had given this signal and early proof of. — Mr. De Grey, a Groom of the Bed-chamber, and son to the Lord Chief Justice, replied to that part of Mr. Windham's speech which asserted, that any mode of furnishing the Crown with money not under the controul of parliament was illegal, and contended that neither the letter nor spirit of the 13th of Charles the Second would be violated by the subscription proposed. He was supported by Mr. Charles Townshend, one of the Joint Vice-Treasurers of Ireland, who expressed a concern that national prejudices should yet be cherished, and that whilst it was acknowledged that the Highlanders were engaged in rebellion against the present establishment, it ought also to be remembered that they were employed and distinguished themselves with honour against the common enemies of this country in the late war. After these alterations, the Gentlemen who did not approve of a subscription withdrew, and those who remained entered their names with the several sums affixed; the dissentients then returned to the Swan, where a protest was agreed to and subscribed, and some other resolutions formed of which an account will be given in a future paper.

(B.) Page 27.

To those of the citizens of Norwich, who are most likely to be affected by an increase in the price of provisions, and to whom a hand-bill, containing what is called "Mr. Windham's Speech, &c." may be supposed to be addressed...

MY GOOD FRIENDS,

THOUGH it is with great reluctance that I offer any remarks on the paper above alluded to, or confess so far the author's powers of mischief, yet the wish of standing well in your opinion, and of vindicating myself against charges, which, if true, I should think very important, induces me to trouble you with a few words. On the author himself I have nothing to observe; about him there can be no difference of opinion. Whatever weight any of you may be inclined to give to the contents of the paper, no one can mistake the purpose or character of the writer, or hesitate to pronounce, that as the means he uses are the most base, the motives by which he is actuated are the most mean and malignant.

The plain object of the paper is to excite against me your resentments, as one who would have increased the present price of provisions by sending out of the kingdom that grain which was wanted for our own necessities*.

My Friends, whatever judgment you may form of my conduct, you shall, at least, not have to complain, that I do not deal openly by you. So far from wishing, as the author of the paper would insinuate, to conceal the part I have taken, I am ready not only to avow my conduct in the fullest ex-

* Wheat was 32s. to 33s. 6d. Rye 13s. to 14s. Barley 11s. to 12s. per comb. Best flour 49s. per sack.

tent, but to assure you, at this instant, and upon mature reflection, there is no part which I do not perfectly approve. What I have either thought, felt, or acted upon the occasion, is this. — I wished, in common, I conceive, with every one else, that the state of provisions in this country might have been such as to allow of our affording some relief to the distresses of our neighbours. I thought. (and have not yet changed my opinion) that the state of our provisions was such; and that we might have given the relief asked, without the effect being felt in this country at all. But, at any rate, I thought we should enquire, whether it was so or not; that we may not be deterred by imaginary dangers; and, if we could do nothing else, might at least show to the French, that we had the wish to assist them. For this reason I proposed, that a committee should be appointed to inquire, what change might have taken place since the sitting of the former committee. — Now, my Friends, what do you see in all this that should be deserving of blame? Are any of you so selfish, narrow-minded, or vindictive, so unlike Englishmen, not to say Christians, as to maintain, that, because the French and we are rival, and often hostile nations, that you would not furnish them in their distress with a morsel of bread, even though you should have enough remaining for yourselves? Will you go so far as to say, that you would not assist them unless that were the case: in other words, that if any inconveniences, however small, was to arise from it to yourselves, you would leave them to perish in their distress? If such only is your charity, it cannot be said to be entitled to any high commendations. But supposing you did restrain your bounty within limits so unworthy, would you have been prepared to say, and that too without inquiry, that such a pittance as they asked, namely, less than one day's consumption of this country, could not have been granted without increasing the price of grain to our own poor? I

certainly was not prepared to say so, nor have I yet adopted that opinion; on the contrary, I am quite persuaded, had our ministers* done their duty, and been willing to risk, as all men meaning to do their duty must do, the raising a popular clamour against themselves, for the sake of a great national object, that the quantity asked by the French might have been furnished without any sensible effect in this country whatever. And I think it for ever to be regretted, and may be hereafter felt severely to our cost, that an opportunity has been missed of doing such an act of grace to a great and generous nation, at a moment when they were manifesting the most marked good will to us, and when their minds were in a state to receive the deepest impressions either of kindness or enmity. But these will be said perhaps to be distant considerations: let us look to some that are more more immediate.

You are informed, no doubt, that all France is at this moment in arms; that men's minds are in the most dreadful and alarming ferment; that there is a suspension of all regular Government; and that instances are daily occurring of persons of the first condition sacrificed to the popular fury. In the midst of this, the English, many thousands of whom are distributed over that kingdom, travelled about with perfect safety; being received even with particular marks of cordiality, as persons presumed to be well affected to that cause of liberty for which the French are now contending.

Will any one pretend to say, that a refusal, at such a moment, to assist with the least supply, that part of their distress which arose from want of provisions, might not so have inflamed their minds against this country, as to have endangered the life of every Englishman at that time in

* Mr. Pitt's first administration.

France? Will you yourselves pretend to say, had the circumstances been reversed — had this country been in arms, and in want of provisions, and a small relief, solicited from our neighbours, been refused, for reasons which we had thought frivolous, that Frenchmen travelling through the country would have nothing to apprehend from the effects of popular violence? That they felt deeply the ungraciousness of our conduct, is well known to all who were then in France.

There was a moment, when, from the concurrence of this with other causes, our Ambassador at Paris thought himself in great danger; and had a regard to his safety induced him to withdraw, a massacre of all the English at Paris might very possibly have been the consequence.

But a slight and recent fact will shew our conduct has operated more effectually than any general reasoning: — a servant of a friend of mine, who arrived no longer ago than yesterday, was stopped on his way by some dragoons, and held a long while in parley with a pistol cocked at his breast, on no other ground than ‘his being one of that nation who had refused them a morsel of bread at the moment of their extreme need.’ They were at last only pacified by being assured that the refusal was the act of individuals, and not approved by the nation at large.

You may judge from hence, whether this pitiful conduct of ours might or might not have produced consequences the most tragical. If such consequences were not produced, let us not argue, that, our fears having been found unnecessary, part of the motive to compliance which I have stated is in consequence done away: but rather say, that the nation that has borne with such moderation what they deemed ill-usage, was, for that very reason, better entitled to be treated well.

These, my Friends, were the principal considerations which induced me to make that motion : and which, I fear, will forbid me to repent of it, even if I should have the misfortune, which I should think a very great one, to have incurred your ill-will by it. The fairness of my motives you will not call in question. I am no corn-factor who am to profit by raising the price of grain ; my tenants will not pay me a farthing more, whatever quantity had been sent to the French ; I cannot be suspected of a wish to benefit foreigners at the expence of my own countrymen, perhaps of my own constituents, beyond what charity requires from man to man. — I should say, that I could have no private interest in the question, if I did not recollect a pretty strong one, and of which I was fully aware at the time : — an interest not to do what I thought right, from a view of the very event that has now happened, and the possibility that some wretch might be found base enough to make the attempt which we have now seen : but the attempt will, I trust, prove abortive. As you cannot but be satisfied of the integrity of my motives, so I trust to your good sense and generous feelings to enter fully into the force of my reasons. — I will never believe, till I hear it from yourselves, that more can be meant, by any impatience you may feel, than that the interests of our own people were entitled first to be considered ; and that in any question between us and them, a small inconvenience on our part might be allowed to outweigh a large one on theirs. But I will never suspect you of an opinion so base, as that an Englishman is not to give relief to a Frenchman ; or, that when we have conquered them in the field, we should not be equally ready to dispute the prize with them in the nobler contest of generosity. — I say this, supposing all interest of our own out of the question, but I am persuaded that interest and policy demanded this compliance at our hands, as much as honour

and humanity. — I am persuaded too, that if ministry had not shrunk from their duty, but had conducted the measure as it was in their power to conduct it, the relief required might have been given, and all the good resulting from it been obtained, without any sacrifice on the part of this country at all. I will not detain you longer, however, in the discussion of this subject. I am desirous to transmit to you immediately such an explanation of my conduct as may prevent misconstruction and defeat the malice of those who would rob me of your good opinion; a possession which I shall be ever ambitious to retain, and which I will never, by intentional misconduct, deserve to forfeit. Being, Gentlemen, with the greatest truth and attachment,

Your very obliged and faithful
humble servant,

London, August 5, 1789.

W. WINDHAM.

[The above letter appeared in the Norfolk Chronicle of August 8, 1789.]

(C.) Page 31.

Mr. Windham's Speech,

July 2, 1792,

At a County Meeting at Norwich, to address His Majesty on the subject of a Proclamation against Seditious Meetings.

(From the Norfolk Chronicle;)

HE began with apologizing for his troubling the meeting on this occasion, the object of which he conceived would only have required his hearty assent — but when he found Gentlemen wander from the subject, and the purpose of that

meeting, and instead of merely voting an Address of Thanks to His Majesty for the Proclamation, enter into those endless discussions, which the mention of a Parliamentary Reform must bring forward, he thought it proper to make a few observations: First, with respect to the Proclamation; he wished to know if there was any thing new in this; had not Proclamations been issued upon less interesting occasions — he would ask what was there in the Proclamation that warranted this unexpected opposition to the Address? — Did the Proclamation enact any new laws? — Did it suspend any old ones? — It went no further than to caution people from receiving, with eagerness and confidence, opinions which tended to destroy all subordination, and in the end to the subversion of the constitution, and for which an Address of Thanks is to be voted for His Majesty's care and regard to the happiness and safety of his subjects. — Mr. Windham then reverted to the subject of Reform, which, though he confessed was of too great a magnitude for a proper discussion in that place, yet there were certain points, relating personally to himself, which induced him, in some measure, to go into it. It had been pretty generally represented, that he had, in another place, said he would oppose a Parliamentary Reform, in whatever shape it might be brought forward; so far from it, he was a friend to universal Reform. — If Gentlemen, from a constant application of the word, had lost its original and true meaning, he must inform them, that Reform meant to make better, and would that be the case, if all those levelling principles were adopted here, which have been received in a neighbouring kingdom? — Publications of a most inflammatory nature were circulated with the greatest industry among the lower ranks of people — clubs were formed, at which ideas of a most dangerous tendency were instilled into their minds, and delusive prospects were held out, which a Parliamentary Reform it was

told them would realize ; but above all, correspondences were carried on between the clubs in this kingdom and those in France, the latter of which, the real friends to, and those who had been the first in bringing the Revolution in that country about, utterly detested : — That it was not a mere assertion, or his own opinion entirely ; he would beg leave to mention a man, whose name was not unknown to those associations — a man who might be supposed to have some knowledge in this business, and one who had had no inconsiderable share in bringing that Revolution to its present state. The man he alluded to, was M. la Fayette, who, in a letter to the National Assembly, had reprobated, in the strongest terms, the conduct of the members of the Jacobin Club ; men, he writes, who far from having any share in that Government, were working even against the Constitution, as by law established ; a faction, M. Fayette insists, that ought, for the safety of the country, to be immediately extirpated ; yet these are the men whom our Reformists are known to correspond with, and to whom emissaries are continually sent. What ! are we to stand with our arms folded, or are we not acting more like real friends of our country, to oppose at the onset, these dangerous proceedings ? But a few years ago, the question put by electors to a candidate for a seat in Parliament, was, are you firmly attached to the principles of our glorious Constitution, as by law established ? These very men now will not allow that we have any Constitution at all. He would inform those, who upon all occasions are referring us to the Revolution in France, as a precedent for us to follow, that the Constitution of this country was looked up to by the authors of that Revolution with the highest respect and admiration ; and that our superior happiness, prosperity, and consequence among nations to which we were very much inferior in natural advantages, were to be attributed solely to that admirable

form of government, which had not been made in an instant, but for which we are indebted to the united wisdom of our ancestors. Mr. Windham stated, that if men, as he might be, were willing to suffer some little inconveniences for the cause of liberty, yet that country (France) not only suffered inconvenience, but great misery from one end of the kingdom to the other. They who think otherwise, are completely ignorant of the whole matter.

Mr. Windham then remarked on the presumptuous folly of those men, who, from their avocations in life, had not opportunities of deep research, and who of course must have but a very superficial knowledge of what such changes might produce, coming forward with confidence and boldness in matters which those who might be supposed more acquainted with them, from their continual application and attention to them, never entered upon or attempted to undertake without the utmost fear and trembling. [Here Mr. Windham, to evince the force of his own reasoning, quoted from an author, of whom he supposed it would be no small recommendation to these gentlemen to find he was an opponent of Mr. Burke.] He compared our Constitution to a comfortable house, which had descended from father to son for ages, and which had always been found perfectly convenient to the families that had inhabited it; it came to pass, however, that when the present owner had one day been describing with pleasure and satisfaction, the enjoyment of his situation to some of his neighbours, they told him, with the utmost seriousness, that there were many evident defects in it, and advised him to make some alterations—the good man was thunderstruck at their assertions, and more so upon asking them what good was to be obtained by the change; they freely confessed they could not immediately point that out, only it certainly should be altered, and with his leave they would undertake to do it. The

owner upon this began to make enquiries about the professional skill of these men; for, says he, I am perfectly happy in my present state, and even should they make improvements (which I by no means see likely), myself and family must be put to the greatest inconveniences while those are making, and heaven knows, if they may not bring my now comfortable dwelling about my ears. He also made another allusion in his speech respecting the lengths men would go, so far as words were concerned; he compared those men, who would leave nothing unattempted that their pens and tongues could effect, while it did not encroach on their personal interests, to a man at a horse-race, who being rather short-sighted, and somewhat interested in the determination of the match, insisted, with the utmost vehemence and obstinacy, that his favourite horse came in first. They have at those places, says Mr. Windham, a very summary method of settling these matters, which is no more than proposing a bet; this was immediately done, and five guineas to one was offered; the effect this had was wonderful, for this man who had a prospect of winning the sum, and who before would have risked his eternal salvation on his opinion, would not now hazard a single guinea. Mr. Windham trusted, that as he gave Gentlemen credit for the disinterestedness of their sentiments, they would in return do him the justice to believe he acted upon the same principle. — If men really preferred a republican government, and were honest in their sentiments, he by no means blamed them. He could live in perfect charity with such men, and grant them toleration in all its latitude, and that was more, he feared, than some of his late friends were now ready to grant him. — That interest was not the object that induced him to take the side of the question he had done, he begged leave, in a few words, to make apparent; that he was acting diametrically opposite to his own interest, many of those Gentlemen (to whom he

must confess himself under obligations, and to differ from whom gave him infinite concern,) had very pointedly explained to him; but that concern was greatly alleviated, when the difference that subsisted between them, would, upon investigation, be found very minute indeed, for though they did not agree on subordinate points, their general principles were still the same. He did not see how Gentlemen could argue that a Parliamentary Reform would injure his interest in Norwich, if the right of election was more popular, unless they thought that the contest would be more expensive. He said he was returned for no borough, and had no borough to dispose of; therefore, on those grounds, he did not oppose reform. Mr. Windham concluded his speech, with the utmost animation, in nearly the following words:—That the honour and satisfaction in being chosen a representative of Norwich, was indeed most intimately connected with his happiness; but he should think himself unworthy that situation, in which their kindness had placed him, should he act contrary to the dictates of his own conscience, which had led him to give his opinion sincerely and openly upon this important subject.

(D.) Page 70.

Extract of a Letter from the Right Honourable W. Windham, to Sir J. C. Hippisley, Bart, previous to the debate on the Catholic Question, 1808.

“ THE short argument is, that in this, as in other cases, you must chuse between opposite dangers; and that the danger to be apprehended from leaving the Catholics of Ireland in their present state, is greater than any that can be

supposed to arise, in whatever length of time, out of the increase of their present privileges. If the Church be necessary to the State (as it is), the State must be acknowledged to be equally necessary to the Church; and what is to become of the Church of England, should England itself be lost? or how shall England be maintained, if the French should set a permanent footing in Ireland? The condition of Ireland is, for the greater part of its population, that of a sort of semi-barbarism; which not only keeps that country in a depressed state, deprived, for the greater part, of those advantages, which nature seems to have intended for it; but renders it, in the present circumstances of the world, a source of continued and imminent danger to us. This depressed and disordered state seems to have been altogether produced, by the system of laws and government adopted originally, perhaps necessarily, but since continued unnecessarily. With respect to the Catholics; without converting them, the only operation of these laws has been to brutalize and barbarize them, rendering them at the same time our enemies. Of these laws, the greater part have, during the present reign, been repealed; and, upon the same principle, as also with a view to convey to the Catholics the real and practical benefit of what has already been done for them, it would be right, in my opinion, to repeal the remainder. The danger of such repeal, even at any period the most distant, I cannot persuade myself to be any at all. If the Church of England is ever to be overturned, or undermined, it will not be by the Catholics, but by sects of a far different description, or by persons of no religion whatever."

(E.) Page 130.

IN the House of Lords, on the 6th of June 1810, in a debate on the Question for referring to a Committee of the whole house the Petitions of the Roman Catholics of Ireland,

Earl GREY, in maintaining the necessity of extending relief to the Catholics, drew a picture of the perils with which the Empire was surrounded by the progress of the enemy in every quarter. Such dangers, he observed, threatened from without. Was there nothing to appal from a view of our internal situation? When every thing that was visible was of an alarming nature, it was no inconsiderable aggravation of the evil to see the great men which had been snatched from their country by the hand of death, at the moment when her perils stood most in need of their commanding talents. Within the last four years they had lost two great statesmen, Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, to whom, above all others, he could safely affirm, the different political descriptions in the country looked up for that wisdom in council and energy in execution, so necessary in any pressing emergency of public affairs. To these was now added the third loss, the subject of their present lamentations. It was unnecessary to say that he alluded to the late Mr. Windham. It was his misfortune at different times to differ from that distinguished and regretted character, yet in the heat of political disagreement, he never ceased to admire his many and splendid virtues. — He was a man of a great, original, and commanding genius — with a mind cultivated with the richest stores of intellectual wealth, and a fancy winged to the highest flights of a most captivating imagery; of sound and spotless integrity (hear! hear!), with a warm spirit, but a generous heart (hear! hear!), and of a courage and deter-

mination so characteristic, as to hold him forward as the strong example of what the old English heart could effect or endure. He was such a man, that his adversary, if there was any man worthy to be his adversary, must respect him. He had, indeed, his faults, but they served like the skilful disposition of shade in works of art, to make the impression of his virtues more striking, and gave additional grandeur to the great outline of his character.

IN the House of Commons, on the 7th of June 1810,

Lord MILTON rose, and in a tone which the strength of his feelings frequently rendered inaudible, spoke to the following effect: — In moving, Sir, for a new writ for Higham Ferrers, I feel it to be my duty to speak of that illustrious man whose death has occasioned the present motion. It would have been better if the performance of that duty had devolved upon some more competent person; at the same time, I must say, that connected, as I had the honour to be, with that illustrious man, my heart would have upbraided me if I had seen any person whatever more eager to do that justice than myself. I decline to take that course, for which are some examples, with regard to other distinguished individuals, in consequence of the last strict injunctions of my deceased friend; and in the observations which I mean to submit to you, I do not wish to allude to any particular part of his public conduct, lest such allusion should tend to create the slightest difference of opinion among those who are willing to do honour to his memory. When I speak of his great talents and unsullied integrity, I feel confident that no difference can arise, either among those who agreed or those who disagreed with him. All persons admit the splendour of his genius, the extent of his ability, the value and

the variety of his mental acquirements; all who have had any opportunity of witnessing the display of his vigorous, his instructive, his rich and polished eloquence, will, I am persuaded, concur with me in the opinion, that his death has caused a great, and perhaps, an irreparable vacancy in this house. But in addition to all the qualities of genius, information and integrity, which confessedly belonged to my lamented friend, there was one character which attached to him in a most eminent degree — (Here the Noble Lord was quite oppressed by his emotion, and there was a loud and general cry of hear, hear, hear!) — I believe, resumed the Noble Lord, that it will ever remain in the memory of this house, that among the most interesting peculiarities which distinguished my friend, was an undaunted intrepidity under all circumstances, such indeed as rarely falls to the lot of man, and a manly promptitude to speak his mind upon all occasions. He was the man of whom more than another it might well be said —

Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solidâ.

He was the man who was never to be moved from his purpose, or relaxed in his exertion by any considerations, either of fear or of favour — no, never was he to be warped from the honest dictates of his own mind. This quality, always so valuable, and which, on all occasions, conferred such peculiar importance upon his sentiments, renders his loss at present an aggravated national calamity. For never, perhaps, was it more necessary that public men should not shrink from their duties, but act firmly and consistently with the dictates of an honest and unbiassed opinion. While I dilate upon the merits of my deceased friend, it is my wish

to abstain from any thing like exaggeration. It was very rarely his lot to obtain what is usually termed popularity. But, if it be true, as it has often been remarked, that rarely high character and popularity are to be found joined together, his fate furnished an impressive illustration of that remark. There may be persons ready to follow the inclination of what is called popularity respecting my friend. But although he may not have the favour of such persons, sure I am, that in no part of his conduct did he ever want the sanction of an approving conscience — that in no instance whatever was he without that highest of human gratifications. No, his honourable mind was ever conscious that if it did not enjoy, at least it deserved the good opinion of the country. — That he actually had the good opinion of all those who are capable of truly appreciating character, I have not the slightest doubt. Among all those who attach any value to real public virtue and talent, I am firmly persuaded that no man ever stood higher. If he had faults and indiscretions, which of us are without them? but his faults and indiscretions were not of any ordinary cast, for they sprung from no ordinary source. They were not the effect of any deficiency of understanding or lowness of view — no, but of that high-minded generosity which was his peculiar characteristic. His disinterestedness was wholly unquestionable. Never did he appear to regard in the slightest degree in what manner his public conduct might affect himself — how it might impair his character or his circumstances. Influenced alone by what he conceived to be right, he steadily pursued it without any dread of consequences. Whether his ideas of right or wrong were generally correct, or whether results generally justified those ideas, certain I am that I anticipate the concurrence of those who closely observed him, that the feelings and the motives I have described, were the uniform guides of his conduct. — At an early period of his life, he

had attached himself to another great man (Mr. Burke), whose loss the country has already deplored. He imbibed from that great character those opinions which he invariably pursued; and though, at one time, it might be said, that he became exceedingly alarmed at what some might regard as improvements, but what others might consider as innovations, it proceeded from a reverential awe for the true principles of the constitution. — The Noble Lord then expressed that it had been his wish to avoid any thing which could tend to excite controversy and to confine himself to those points, upon which controversy was impossible. It was his wish to say something on those parts of his character which others might not have had opportunities of observing, but he felt himself unequal to the task. Perhaps it was unnecessary that he should do so. The house knew his public character; and certain he was, that among his friends and foes there was but one opinion — that in his death they had sustained a loss which perhaps the youngest among them might not live to see repaired. Having thus unburdened his own mind on the occasion, he believed he had no more to say. Had he not so expressed himself, his conduct might have been justly considered more extraordinary. He lamented what he had said had been so inelegantly spoken, but he was not able sufficiently to master his feelings to express himself as he could wish. He concluded by moving, “That the Speaker do issue his writ for a burgess to serve in parliament for the borough of Higham Ferrers, in the room of the Right Honourable William Windham, deceased.”

III

Mr. CANNING, though he had been long in the habit of opposing the public conduct of the illustrious character now no more, rose to bear his testimony to those talents and virtues which had distinguished Mr. Windham's splendid

career. He felt equally with the Noble Lord, the impossibility of doing justice to talents so exalted, to virtues so rare. Among all the storms and all the contests which had raged in his time, whatever might have been the frenzy of the moment, he above all had avoided the appearance and the reality of soliciting popular approbation. But if his conduct had not made him the object of transient popularity, it had secured him what was of greater value, lasting and unperishable admiration. At no time could so great a character pay the last debt of nature, without leaving a chasm much to be deplored, and difficult to fill up; but never was there a period at which his loss could be more sensibly felt than at the present. Throughout his life, from a sincere sense of public duty, he had exposed himself to every threatening evil, in what he conceived to be the cause of his country. — He had left them a proof that conduct so upright, if not calculated to gain the applause of a party, was certain of conciliating universal esteem. It had often been his (Mr. Canning's) fate, during the time he had been his contemporary, to oppose his public conduct. This he had frequently done, thinking he (Mr. Windham) carried the best principles to an excess, but never once had he suspected his motives to be dishonourable. — There was a selfishness of which it was difficult for a public man to divest himself — the selfish pleasure of pleasing those with whom they were in the habit of acting; but superior still, even of this most amiable of all selfish feelings had Mr. Windham been acquitted, both by his political friends and opponents. When he recollected the accomplishments by which that great character had been graced — when he considered the extent of his knowledge, and the force of his eloquence, which, if not the most commanding they had ever heard, was the most insinuating — which, if it did not convince, delighted all who heard it, made them feel with the man while speak-

ing, and enter into his heart, he could not but feel somewhat reconciled to that which had been called "a blot in our constitution." He alluded to the boroughs, of which so many complaints had been made. He did not say, that if none such already existed in the constitution, he would create them, but among the necessary imperfections of our system, he thought it must be admitted that they had turned to a good account. — The Noble Lord had concluded his speech by moving that a new writ be issued for the borough of Higham Ferrers — that was one of those boroughs held up as defects in the parliamentary representation of that house. He begged the house would recollect that when, from a loss of popularity, that Right Honourable Gentleman was deprived of a seat for his native county, that house had been indebted for the services and the splendid talents of Mr. Windham to the borough of Higham Ferrers.

(F.) Page 139.

The following letter, referred to in the foregoing narrative, was addressed by Mr. Windham to his nephew Captain Lukin, on the death of Mrs. Foy, the niece of the former and sister of the latter.

" Pall Mall, May 31, 1800.

" SAD, sad news, my dear William, I have to send you, not of a public, but of a private nature, and such as will try your spirits, and afflict your kind heart, more than any thing that has yet befallen you. Your poor sister Mary — never will you see her more ! — never more will she welcome

your return, rejoice in your success, and gladden the hearts of us all by her gay and amiable manners, and by her kind and virtuous affections ! After a long and bad labour, which ended in the death of the child, and after fostering our hopes for some days by an appearance of doing well, she failed all at once, and has left us nothing but to lament the breach thus made in the happiness of the family, to follow her with our regrets, and to console ourselves with the reflection, that she has escaped at least from all the ills of life, and partakes of all the hopes which Revelation holds out to those who do not renounce them by the wickedness of their lives, and by the abdication of all desire and endeavour to recommend themselves to the Divine mercy.

“ Your brothers George and Robert, who are in town, and have heard from me, and in part by a letter from Foy, this dreadful news, are preparing to go to your mother at Bath, where she has at least had the consolation of attending Mary in her last moments. Your father, who, upon the strength of the good accounts which we had received, went down to Rochford, will learn the account from me to-day ; and will fortunately be in the situation where he can be most useful in concerting with Mr. Wright, how he shall break the news to Kitty, and how he shall best console her under the affliction, which I fear will not fail to shock her very much. Mrs. Windham and I intend to set out to-morrow morning to join your mother at Bath. There is fortunately an adjournment of parliament, which will enable me to go without difficulty ; and Mrs. W. as you will imagine is clearly on the side of our going. What a different visit from what it would have been, had poor Mary been there ! What a loss to the future happiness of Felbrigg !

“ I must not pursue these reflections, nor encourage you to pursue them too much, lest they should relax your ardour in the active service in which you may soon be employed. I

almost tremble now at what I have been endeavouring to secure to you relative to the object about which Lord Spencer has written, at my request, to Lord St. Vincent. I could at this moment almost be glad if the application should fail; but we must go our course, and leave the event to Providence.

" God bless you, my dear William. You will give some tears to poor Mary, as I do; but you must wipe them away, and preserve only an affectionate and tender remembrance of her. *That* she deserved from you, and from all connected with her. Mrs. W., if she knew of my writing, would I am sure desire her most cordial and kind remembrances. Let us hear from you whenever you can write. Your mother will be very anxious to hear, as well as yours ever,

" my dear William,

" most affectionately,

" W. WINDHAM."

The letter which follows was written by Mr. Windham on the death of a most worthy and excellent friend. It is addressed to the son of the deceased person.

" *Pall Mall,*

" MY DEAR SIR,

April 27, 1807.

" HOWEVER strange it is that I should have delayed till now to say any thing upon the subject of your late irreparable loss, you will never have doubted for a moment of the manner in which it must have been felt both by Mrs. Windham and myself. Never were people more truly sensible of the loss of any one, than we have been of that of your excellent father, whether considered with respect to Mrs. H—and you, and the rest of your family, or with respect to ourselves. Of his virtues it is needless to speak. Full justice will, I am persuaded, have been done to them by the

universal regret of all who personally knew him, or were acquainted with him only by character or reputation. I may say with confidence that I never knew a man of a purer mind, of sounder principles, of more amiable dispositions, or of a more manly cast of character. His value to me could not be less than in full proportion to these opinions. Besides the effect of intimate knowledge, and habits of personal intercourse, the sense of all these virtues was doubly impressed on me by long continued acts of service and kindness, and by a steady and indulgent friendship which he had the goodness to feel for me during a course of years, unvarying in any fortune, and which, I am persuaded, never would have varied, had our lives been severally prolonged to ever so late a period.

“ Such friends it is impossible to replace, and whether, therefore, we consider this loss as respecting ourselves, or in relation to those still more deeply affected by it, and not less dear to us, it throws a gloom over all our prospects, and particularly those connected with Norfolk, which we cannot expect that any time should entirely overcome. We shall never return into Norfolk without recalling scenes that used to await us there; without combining the thought of what we used to meet, with the reflection that we are to meet it no more. I wish the same occasions may not prove to you, in like manner a renewal of impressions which time by its natural and intended operation must be continually wearing away, and which, at all events, must be made to give place to those numerous duties which you will now more than ever be called upon to discharge, as well as to those enjoyments, many of them connected with these very duties, which I trust life has in store for you.

“ To Mrs. H—— such return to serenity and composure, or at least to cheerfulness, may be slower and more difficult; — though similar cares and duties, and enjoyments

derived from the happiness of those around her, must have the effect by degrees of turning her mind from the memory of what she has lost to the contemplation of what still remains to her. Mrs. Windham and I regretted not a little the absence of Miss H——, as well on her account, if indeed on that account it was to be regretted, as from the consolation and aid which she might have afforded to Mrs. H——. Her own situation, left to herself, was in fact truly pitiable, though free from every sentiment of self-reproach, which people on such occasions are so apt to conceive, as having been absent by any want of prudence or foresight, or by any act which she could attribute to herself.

“ Most deeply are we interested in the welfare of all that remains of the family, and have heard, therefore, with no small satisfaction, what I hope is a true representation of the present and probable future situation of your affairs. Mrs. Windham has forborne to write to Mrs. H—— knowing that such a letter could convey nothing but what Mrs. H—— would feel already assured of, and depending upon my writing to you which she supposes me, indeed, to have done long since. I have been, in like manner, little anxious about writing, from a full conviction that you would never doubt for a moment how I felt upon this occasion, either with respect to your father, whom I loved and valued beyond most men I ever knew, or with respect to those whom he loved and valued; yourself, my dear Sir, in the first instance, whom I have always considered as the genuine representative of your father's virtues. Every sentiment of affection and attachment which the merits, as well as kindness, of each individual of your family claim so strongly from Mrs. Windham and myself, must be enhanced by the memory of what we felt for your father, and of what he proved so amply that he had the goodness to feel for us.

“ With my mind full of such a subject, I cannot bring myself to touch on any other, and therefore can only request

you to receive and convey to Mrs. H—— and all your family, the assurance of our most affectionate regards, and to believe me to be, dear Sir,

“ Your sincere and unalterable friend,

“ W. WINDHAM.”

The Writer of the foregoing Narrative is happy to avail himself of the permission which has been obligingly given to him by J. COURTENAY, Esq. (a gentleman with whom Mr. Windham maintained a long and valued friendship) to lay before the Reader the following

CONGRATULATORY ODE,

ADDRESSED TO

WILLIAM WINDHAM, ESQ.

OF FELBRIGG, NORFOLK,

ON HIS RECOVERY FROM A DANGEROUS FIT OF ILLNESS,

1778.

Musis amicus tristitiam et metus,

Tradam protervis in mare Creticum

Portare ventis ———

HOR. Lib. 1. Ode 26.

I.

TO WINDHAM tune no venal lyre,

His name shall every note inspire,

And dignify my lays ;

Again, he'll lead fair Freedom's* train,

Who, charm'd by his enlivening strain,

Will join in heartfelt praise.

* Mr. Windham had very lately distinguished himself by a spirited and eloquent speech, against an Address proposed at Nor-

II.

Again, he'll shine in bloom of youth,
Endu'd with genius, science, truth ;
Fitted for Virtue's shrine :
Let the same skill † our WINDHAM save,
That snatch'd a GLO'STER ‡ from the grave ;
I'll sing its power divine.

III.

When anxious fears the mind deprest,
No festive mirth could touch the breast ;
Slow mov'd the languid hours ;
Of thee, my Friend, alone we speak,
While sorrow dims each pallid cheek,
And on each visage low'rs.

IV.

For you, the timid, blushing Maid,
With tend'rest wishes, fervent pray'd ;
Love every accent wings :
But now she tunes her grateful voice,
And bids the vocal lyre rejoice,
While rapture wakes the strings.

wich, in support of the American War. He set off the night before from Mr. Sheridan's house, and just arrived in time to attend the Meeting.

† For an account of the illness from which Mr. Windham had recovered, see page 10 of the preceding Narrative. ED.

‡ His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, who had lately been attended by Dr. Jebb.

V.

Again, in social circles gay,
Unrivall'd talents you'll display,
While brilliant fancy glows ;
And language, splendid and refin'd,
O'er your luxuriant, vivid mind
A double lustre throws.

VI.

O ! born to bless the common weal ;
To emulate a KEPPEL's zeal,
In naval annals bright ;
When each indignant sailor rav'd,
And Victory's signals vainly wav'd,
To call the recreant Knight.

VII.

Oft have I seen thy spirit rise,
Oft mark'd the lightning of thine eyes,
Along th' embattl'd line ;
Ardent, proud Freedom's sword to wield,
To lead her offspring to the field,
And like a HAMPDEN shine.

VIII.

Again, we'll turn the classic page,
Where Greece defies a Tyrant's rage,
And soars above controul ;
Then Liberty her sons could charm,
Nerve every gallant Chieftain's arm,
And fire his gen'rous soul.

IX.

TOWNSHEND, with quick sensations blest,
 Will snatch you to a Soldier's breast,
 By sacred ties ally'd ;
 Who priz'd and lov'd thy noble Sire ;
 To all his fame sees thee aspire,
 And feels a father's pride.

X.

Already see the Patriot Band,
 By hope elated, press your hand,
 And mutual welcomes blend ;
 From BURKE the tear of joy will start,
 While SAVILLE * clasps you to his heart,
 And CA'NDISH † hails his friend !

XI.

When Britain shall revere your name,
 And plausible Senâtes spread your fame,
 Unbought by paltry art ;
 Still o'er your voice will truth preside,
 And bold, indignant, manly pride
 Sway your intrepid heart.

XII.

While long debates protract the night,
 Marking Time's yawning, tedious flight,
 In every languid eye ;
 Your wit the dullness shall illumine,
 As flames electric chase the gloom
 That clouds a somb'rous sky.

* The late Sir George Saville.

† Lord John Cavendish.

To the above Ode may be added some Lines, which were written by the Lady of JOHN BROWNE, Esq. of Hethersett in Norfolk, a faithful and much-esteemed friend of the subject of the preceding Memoirs.

*On taking leave of MR. WINDHAM,
October 5, 1798.*

WINDHAM, farewell ! Britannia's pride and boast,
Statesmen like Thee are in themselves a host.

— Go to thy Noble Friends, firm in the cause,
Still guard our Throne, our Altars, and our Laws.
WINDHAM, farewell ! and may that awful power,
Who smil'd on Britain in the darkest hour,
And bade her rise sole Empress of the Main,
Howes, Vincents, Duncans, Nelsons, in her train ;
Thy generous virtues still inspire and guard,
And give thy patriot cares their due reward.
Thine eye's keen light'ning still may treason fear,
And impious faction shrink when Thou art near.

Oft may thy Beech's venerable shade,
(By Autumn's richest tints now lovelier made)
View Thee from public cares awhile retire,
To taste the bliss domestic scenes inspire ;
Where elegance and taste, friendship and love,
Judgment and wit, the social hours improve.
As erst Rome's genius view'd the laurel shade,
Where Pliny with his lov'd Calpurnia stray'd,
Such transports in Britannia's bosom glow,
Since what Laurentium *was*, is Felbrigg *now*.

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The important and valuable Library of the late Thomas Amoyot, Esq.,
F.R.S., F.S.A.

MESSRS. S. LEIGH SOTHEBY and JOHN WILKINSON, auctioneers of literary property and works illustrative of the fine arts, will sell by AUCTION, at their House, 3, Wellington street, Strand, on Monday, February 10, and three following days, at 1 precisely, the valuable antiquarian, miscellaneous, and historical LIBRARY of the late Thomas Amoyot, Esq., F.R.S., F.S.A.; comprising the first, second, and fourth editions of the Works of Shakspeare and an extensive Collection of Shaksperiana; Dugdale (W.) Monasticon Anglicanum, 3 vols., original edition; Dugdale (W.) Monasticon Anglicanum, by Bandinel, Caloy, and Ellis, 8 vols., a fine subscription copy, in blue morocco; the Baronage of England, and other of his works; Duchesne (A.) Historie Normannorum Scriptores Antiqui; Guillim (J.) Display of Heraldry, best edition; Higden (R.) Polychronicon, black letter, a rare edition, fine copy; Holmshed (R.) Chronicles, 3 vols., best edition; Works of Homer, translated by Chapman, in old blue morocco; Horsley (J.) Britannia Romana, scarce; Rerum Britannicarum Scriptores, very scarce; Rymeri Fœdera, 10 vols.; Sandford (P.) Genealogical History, best edition; Somneri (G.) Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino Anglicanum; the Sydney Papers, 2 vols.; Tanneri (T.) Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica et Notitia Monastica; Thurloe (J.) State Papers, 7 vols.; Wilkins (D.) Concilia Magnæ Britannie, 4 vols., very scarce; set of the Archaeologia; Britton (J.) Archæological Antiquities, 5 vols., an original copy; Strutt (J.) Horda, View of the Dress and Habits of the People, and other of his works; Watt (Dr.) Bibliotheca Britannica, 4 vols.; Willis (B.) Survey of the Cathedrals, 3 vols., copiously illustrated; Carte (T.) History of England and Life of the Duke of Ormonde, 7 vols.; Blomfield (T.) History of the County of Norfolk, 5 vols., fine copy; Annual Register, 1753 to 1849, 90 vols.; Shakspeare, with the variorum notes, 15 vols., and Malone's Supplement, uncut; and another edition, with Boswell and Malone's Notes, 21 vols.; Spenser (G.) whole Works, with Life by Todd, 8 vols.; Gentleman's Magazine, from the commencement to October 1848, 118 vols.; the various Publications of the Camden, Percy, and Shakspeare Societies; with an important series of the valuable Antiquarian Publications of Thomas Hearne. To be viewed two days prior, and catalogues had; if in the country on receipt of six postage stamps.

